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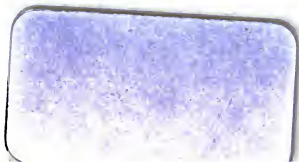
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THE  
LIFE OF SAINT BONIFACE,  
ARCHBISHOP OF MAYENCE,  
AND  
APOSTLE OF GERMANY.

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LONDON:  
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,  
AND NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCLIII.

110. cl. 388.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS AND CO.,  
ALDERSGATE STREET.



## PREFACE.

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THE life of a great Saint of the earlier ages of the Church, is a subject which we approach with feelings different from those with which we regard the biography of the good and holy men who have shone as lights in the English Church of more recent times. The former in part stands on a vantage ground, as being less involved in controversy. The faith of all Christendom was one, and its unity unbroken; and the adversaries who assailed the truth were altogether aliens to the one true fold, for not then, as now, was the Church of one land at variance with that of another. But partly it is also at a disadvantage, because too many have ceased to feel any sympathy with the Church of past ages, from which nevertheless we derive the deposit of our faith, and all the graces of the Sacraments; and some, in the blindness of self-sufficiency, have ventured even to despise it. To disabuse the mind of so great a misconception, it can only be necessary to peruse in a right spirit the lives and writings of but one or two of the Saints who lived during the ages so maligned. No tone of apology, it

will then be seen, is required for men who in reality do so shame, not the practice only, but very much of the boasted learning of later times. Of the truth of this, the following biography may serve in some degree as evidence.

The accusations of darkness and ignorance applied to these periods are indeed unworthy of a laboured refutation, which would here be entirely out of place. To any one who will confront them with the records which they have left, such charges at once rebut themselves; and a painful feeling of humiliation follows the conviction that we have been accustomed to think and speak lightly of men at whose feet we ought to sit and drink in the words of wisdom.

There are one or two points in which the life and practice of the Saints of the early and middle ages stand out in more prominent contrast with that of our later days. Whatever be the cause, there is much of energy and labour wasted now, or thrown away, owing to the desultory manner in which our religious undertakings are begun and carried on. Partly from decay of discipline, partly from want of unity, in part also from indefiniteness and insufficiency of teaching, there results the random character so generally belonging to our religious efforts. Men embark on courses of action singly and alone: and in isolated instances an amount of strength is frittered away which might, if combined, have furnished a vast force for the accomplishment of really great works. Such is the loss entailed by the breaking of the unity of the Church, and the want of discipline is felt in the uncertain obedience of the greater number. Checks and restraints are not of suf-

ficient force and moment to subdue the proneness to insubordination and self-will; but in no less a degree do we suffer from indefiniteness of teaching, resulting from the neglect of all dogmatic theology. When the training is crude and unsystematic, almost the whole work is left in the hands of individuals; and slowly and laboriously they attain singly to an amount of knowledge which would be little more than the foundation on which the superstructure would be reared, if the dogmatic teaching of the Church had been steadily maintained. How strikingly different in these respects was the working of the ancient Church, the life of S. Boniface will exemplify. A great work was to be done, and he felt its greatness, and knew how it should be undertaken. There were no random and desultory efforts. A vast machinery was systematically brought to bear upon the given object; all worked steadily in obedience to a principle established and recognized in the Church from the first, without wasting strength in labours which were not concentrated: and by this very completeness of system all uncertainty of teaching was banished. The Church everywhere exhibited herself fully and uncompromisingly, and all her servants had only to set forth her system without hesitation or qualification. None had occasion to modify their own teaching because they felt that the condition of the Church was a practical contradiction of it. The progress of the Church then was as the smooth and solemn march of a vast army, of which every motion is ordered and regulated by its leader. With this we have also to consider the discipline of a regular life, and the immense advantages flowing from it. Such a life may

not, indeed, be incumbent upon all, but it is manifest how great must be the superiority of men so trained over those who are left in great measure to themselves. There are of course also other differences, it will be expected, observable between the Christianity of the eighth and the nineteenth century : on these it is not the province of a biographer to express an opinion.

A few words will suffice to mention the sources from whence the present Biography has been derived. Of the various lives of S. Boniface, the most full and accurate is by Willibald, who received his information from contemporary authority. This life was subsequently amplified by Othlonus, a Priest and Monk of the Monastery of S. Boniface at Fulda, but without imparting any more facts or other information, except by the insertion of several letters (which have been published in a separate work by Serrarius), written by S. Boniface, or addressed to him. Of the other lives some of the writers are entirely unknown. One is supposed to have been attached to the Church of S. Martin, at Utrecht,<sup>1</sup> not long after the time of Willibald, as he speaks of the Mission of S. Boniface as an event comparatively recent, and of his own country as the chief scene of his labours, stating also that there still survived a woman, now very aged, who gave an account of his martyrdom, as having been herself an eye witness.

These several narratives are not, indeed, as full as many belonging to the same period, and as in the case of so illustrious a martyr we might have expected them to be. But it is hoped that sufficient matter has

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 1.

been furnished to give a distinct picture of S. Boniface as an individual, and to bring before us his interior life and the especial forms of Christian excellence grafted on his natural genius and disposition. Every record of a saint so eminent is of especial value; and from this feeling a few details which might seem needless or insignificant, have been here and there given, as they occur in the several biographies; but an apology can scarcely be necessary for having done so.

To write the life of a saint is, indeed, a religious work, and to be undertaken in a humble and diffident spirit. It is one which carries us away from the vain turmoil of the world around, while yet it makes us think ever less of ourselves, as being so weak, so self-indulgent, so wanting in love and devotion, in comparison not of the blessed martyr himself and the more prominent of his devoted company, but even of the meanest of his fellow-labourers. For every blemish which may mar this volume, and for every offence which unwittingly his words may cause, the writer would express his regret, and ask indulgence in the words of one of the biographers of S. Boniface:—"Perchance, what I have written, some consider of so little value that they attend not to the importance of the things narrated, but only to the person of the weak and sinful writer. Yet this should not be, for the roses are not neglected because they grow on a thorny stem, nor are fruits despised because the earth, saturated with dung, produces them. In both we regard not what is unseemly but that which is needful and pleasurable."



But if the indulgence of the reader be obtained, there remains yet the sense of unworthiness to write the life of so holy a martyr. Who are we to criticise and judge of the actions of so blessed a servant of God? What are we that we should accord either praise or blame? when the same biographer—himself a man of holy and devout life—thus speaks in words which we would adopt as our own:—"Would that I could so speak as that the subject of my narrative should lose no weight through my weakness, which is ever present with me. But, alas for me, for I am wholly polluted, and I live in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and I know and confess that I am altogether unworthy that my tongue should be touched with the burning coal which, taken from the altar, enkindles the soul. Wherefore I will accuse myself, and with penitence and tears will cry unto my LORD, saying, O LORD JESU CHRIST, SON of the living GOD, who for Thy Church didst deign to become incarnate, and to be crucified, to die and rise again, hear me when I cry unto Thee, and according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine iniquity, and grant me a right and well-sounding speech, that my words may be acceptable in Thy sight, and that Thou mayest deign to receive this sacrifice of praise at my hands, Who art blessed for ever and ever: Amen. And now behold, O LORD, I am prepared to tell of Thy holy martyr as Thou shalt enable me; and under Thy guidance do give myself to the work."

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# LIFE OF S. BONIFACE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY YEARS OF WINFRED.

A.D. 680—A.D. 713.

“O how amiable are Thy dwellings : Thou LORD of hosts ! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the LORD : my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.”—  
Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2.

THERE are few annals more impressive than those which relate to the early history of the English Church. There are few which serve more strikingly to show how the greatest evils may be overruled for the far greater abounding of good by the merciful providence of God. The lamp of the early British Church burned dim and faint, and its candlestick was to be removed out of its place. Fierce hordes came from a foreign land, the instruments of God's anger, and all things were swept away before them. The priests were scattered with their flocks, the churches thrown down, and all holy things polluted. But out of the strong was to come forth sweetness ; and after lying once again in heathen darkness for more than a hundred years, England was

to become, far more than it had been, a Christian country. And, after that weary time, the darkness was scattered, and they who had been enemies became the children of CHRIST. Their very fierceness and savage boldness, now softened and subdued, made them ready both to do and to suffer for the sake of Him into Whose death they had been baptized; and those habits of mind and body, which even in their heathen state gave promise of higher things, now transplanted into the heavenly vineyard, were moulded into the fairest and noblest of Christian graces. Wonderful indeed was the accomplishing of this mighty work; wonderful for the shortness of the time, and for the contrast which it furnished to that earlier Church of which the fruits of faith had been so small; as though not until now was England to receive that name by which for so many ages she was known as the Island of the Saints. For till the judgment came from God, and swept it away, the British Church had been but too fruitful in evil teaching and evil practice. It was, according to the earliest historian of the English Church, the parent soil of countless heresies. But now it was to be far different; everywhere were to be seen the fruits of unwavering self-sacrifice, of untiring zeal, and unwearied love. Mysterious indeed it is that to some it is given to become the members of CHRIST's Body, the Church; while into other lands the sound of the Word has not gone forth; mysterious the line which, as it were, divides the one portion of the world from the other, as though the faith of CHRIST could find for itself a home only in the one; yet more mysterious is the fact that in some lands the Faith, when planted,

grows up with premature quickness, and withers away and dies,—that the blood of martyrs has watered many a church, and saints have laboured and striven, and they have but obtained a blessed report themselves, while the edifice which they have raised crumbles away. And again, it is wonderful to trace how an erroneous and defective faith seems to find a more congenial soil in some peoples than in others,—how it springs up and grows with a strange fertility, and spreads abroad on every side; and yet, having reached, as it were, its fixed limits, without external influence to hinder or to crush it, it flags, and droops, and dies, as fire smouldering out for want of fuel to feed it. And no less wonderful is it that some will shape out for themselves, so far as they can, a merely intellectual worship, putting aside all media of devotion; while others love ever to be all occupied, eye and ear, and lip and heart, in the service of God, as receiving all things of Him, and therefore only giving Him of His own. We may not afford now to pursue the thought further; yet no less true is it of nations than of individuals, that some receive the Faith in a fruitful soil, others but in the stony ground, where there is not much depth of earth. Some nations (generation after generation) show but the same unvarying type; there is no advance, no rising to higher things: while others seem especially adapted to attain the greatest excellencies of the Christian character. And such were they, the Saxons of England, to whom the Word of God was preached. In them was a natural disposition and temper of mind most fitted, if we may so speak, to be attracted and riveted by the teaching and ritual of

the Church. And into this fruitful field came the devoted band of Saint Augustine to reap an abundant harvest. Every day were the faithful multiplied, and every day more labourers needed; till in but a short time the barren wilderness had become a well watered garden. From the first coming of Augustine to the birth of him whose life we have undertaken to narrate, there intervened but little more than eighty years; and how wonderfully within that time had the face of the land been changed! England, which then was a heathen country, and her people given over to false gods, was now herself sending forth from her own bosom those who were to be the means of shedding the true light on other regions still covered with the shadow of death. We have now to dwell on the life and work of one of the most illustrious of that glorious band,—the Apostle of Germany.

The birthplace of Winfred (for we shall call him by this the name of his baptism which brings him nearer to us as Englishmen, up to the time of his consecration to the Episcopal office, when he received the name of Boniface) was Credeantun, or Kirton, now Crediton, at that time the residence of the Bishop, in the territory of the West Saxons, which then comprised the counties of Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Devon, and Cornwall. His parents were of noble family: probably his father may have been one of the thanes among whom the West Saxons were divided; his own sister, Winna, it is recorded, became the wife of S. Richard, one of the kings of the West Saxons, and mother of four children, all of whom the Church reckons among the number of her Saints. Of

his childhood we have few particulars. Carefully and tenderly brought up by his mother, he seems to have been his father's favourite child. From the first he displayed great thoughtfulness and seriousness of mind—a faith realising things invisible—far beyond his years. Whatever may have been his knowledge of the precise mode of life which he proposed to himself, his earliest formed desire was to devote himself to the service of God; and in his fourth or fifth year, we are told, his thoughts turned earnestly to the monastic life. For some time he entertained that desire in secret; perhaps it was at times but dormant; at all events, it required something from without to call it forth, and give it a definite direction. This was soon after furnished by the visit of some Ecclesiastics, who, while on a mission for the purpose of preaching to the people, came to his father's house. With these the child conversed, so far as his years and powers of mind permitted him, and his questions were chiefly of heavenly things, and of what might be the mode of life best fitted for himself. Strengthened in his desire, he now laid open his mind to his father. But it required a hard struggle thus to surrender up his favourite child, whom he hoped to leave as the heir of his house and wealth. At first he was inexorable in his refusal, setting before his son the greater attractions of the active over the contemplative life. But that which in his health he could not prevail upon himself to permit, he sanctioned of his own will when laid shortly after on a bed of sickness. The simple piety of earlier times, ever watching to discern in all things the finger of God, would describe such a sickness as an especial



chastening, sent to subdue his resistance to the counsel of GOD respecting his son. A colder generation would speak of coincidences, and of the likelihood of disease, as age was creeping on ; but there seems every reason to lead us to suppose that in proportion as the faith of men is simple and childlike, so will the hand of GOD be everywhere more prominently discernible, not only because their eyes are more open to see the wondrous things of His power, but because there actually is more of His especial watchfulness and care displayed to them. They who would believe themselves to be surrounded, and all things to be guided, solely by what they term natural laws, seem in a far greater measure to be left only to their operation ; so that, when they ignore especial judgments or chastenings, or deny that any visible interpositions of GOD's hand are any longer vouchsafed, they may really be speaking that which is true regarding themselves, because they are living in a degree under a different dispensation. Surely nothing short of this can account for the different tone of ancient and modern writers. Granting that men may have discerned many an especial chastening or mercy where none such existed, it still seems difficult on any other supposition to account for their so frequent occurrence in olden history, and the general proneness now to disbelieve them altogether. There is, indeed, one other hypothesis, from which we shrink instinctively, that no more were vouchsafed then than now, meaning that in no age are there any vouchsafed at all. We dare not thus speak of any age of the Church, of any time under that dispensation in which the HOLY SPIRIT abides in the hearts of those who have been made

the members of CHRIST'S Body; we dare not thus think respecting those to whom the angels themselves are sent forth as ministering spirits. We may therefore safely venture to say, in the present instance, that the sickness did come immediately from GOD as a chastisement for his opposition to the Divine Will, and as such he himself was brought to view it. He now put into execution that which before he had so much recoiled from even permitting. He called together his kinsfolk and acquaintance, and then entrusted his son Winfred to some faithful servants, who conducted him to Exeanceastre, or Exeter, and there presented him for admission into a monastery, over which presided an abbot of the name of Wolfhard. Winfred, following instructions which had been given to him, made his request to be admitted into the monastic life, which the abbot granted, after taking counsel with the brethren and receiving their benediction, as the rule required.

The age at which he was admitted was undoubtedly a very early one; his principal biographer<sup>1</sup> states that he was at this time only seven years old. It is likely, then, that he was admitted into it for his education both in religious and general learning, leaving to time the final determination of his mind as to the monastic state. He continued under Abbot Wolfhard for many years, displaying unwearied diligence in the acquisition of knowledge and the practice of Christian graces. But his mind was one of no ordinary power, and required a higher training than the Monastery of Exeter could afford.

It might be difficult to enumerate the causes which

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 2.

rendered some houses so inferior to others in respect of learning, both secular and religious.

Much was owing to their various constitutions, the rules of some enjoining so much of manual labour, whether in the fields or in the domestic offices, as to leave but a very small amount of time for other employments. Nor can any charge of a wilful hindering of intellectual activity be urged against those monasteries which were most taken up with out-door occupations, and were least prominent for learning. The religious houses were intended to furnish homes for men of the most opposite stamps of mind and disposition ; and it was each man's care to see, when there was entire freedom of choice, that he selected for himself the rule which was most likely in every respect to be most beneficial and most adapted for bringing out to the utmost the powers which God had bestowed upon him.

Winfred now felt that he was called to the acquisition of greater knowledge than the brethren round him had attained to or sought after. It was evident, therefore, that he must resort elsewhere. And to this end he obtained the consent of the Abbot Wolfhard to leave the monastery in which he had been brought up, and departed amid the prayers of the brethren, and beseeching for himself the Divine protection. He directed his footsteps to the monastery of Nuiscelle or Nutselle, near Southampton, presided over at that time by the Abbot Winberct, a man of holy life and much learning.<sup>1</sup> Here he gave himself up to his studies with much diligence, attaining

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 3.

great proficiency, according to the knowledge of the time. We are but too prone to look with contempt more especially upon these particular ages in which Winfred's lot was cast, as not only labouring under many circumstances adverse to the progress of letters, but as also most readily acquiescing in a state of the most perfect intellectual indolence. The former certainly existed, but over them they could have no control, save only to modify their effects. The constant violent changes which altered the face of whole countries, the frightful ravages which each swept away more or less of the materials of learning which they then possessed, the turmoil and convulsion to which their lives were continually exposed, leave it a matter of wonder, not that the amount of learning was in many respects so deficient, but that they had been enabled, amidst so many storms, to preserve and acquire so much. It may safely be asserted that the more we may read impartially of the history and writings of those who lived then, the more must all such unjust estimations of them give way before the knowledge of the truth. In one respect more especially it must prove matter of astonishment to any who have not examined the subject before, when they find (as but a little diligence will enable them to do) how entirely unfounded is the charge so especially brought against them of ignorance of the Holy Scriptures. Rather must it seem a sacrilege against those men of pure hearts and saintly lives so to speak, attributing to them want of acquaintance with that which was their daily food, and on which their thoughts dwelt with such unfailing constancy, that they

came to look upon everything through the medium of Holy Writ. Wonderful, indeed, is the knowledge of it displayed in every thing which they wrote, be it on subjects, in our opinion, ever so little admitting its application—revealing to us how entirely it was the mould in which almost every thought was shaped, and their very language cast. And this, not by any distortion of, or violence done to, the Holy Scriptures, as is evidenced in so shocking a manner by heretical and fanatical bodies, but by a most natural and unobtrusive, and almost intuitive adoption of its words.

At Nutselle, Winfred's life was now one of constant study of the Holy Scriptures, of continual meditation, and laborious vigils. In the first he had already attained great proficiency, not only in their simple exposition, but also in their higher significations, moral and mystical, which are too generally neglected now. Doubtless, in these their profounder meanings, great carefulness is requisite, much serious thought and devotion, that so they be not suffered to exceed their due proportion. For it is possible to depart in search of spiritual interpretations so far from the plain facts of Holy Writ (which, howsoever they may be significant of higher and more heavenly things than at first sight appears, remain facts of perfect historical authority still), as to come in a measure to the conclusion which others have reached by taking their own reason as their only guide, namely, that the narratives of Holy Scripture are not facts of history, but only figurative representations. Still it is equally clear that very much is lost by the general method of looking upon Sacred History as being history and

nothing more. Hence there is no effort to draw from it any higher instructions, any of those beautiful lessons, moral or allegorical, which in earlier times men so delighted to find.

But Winfred's strength of mind was beginning to show itself in the influence which he was now attaining over others. He was one of those commanding dispositions which never fail of having weight on all around. Among the brethren of his monastery, he was at once feared and loved; and although according to their rule only on equality with them, they all yielded to him a voluntary deference as though he were superior. Nor was his reputation confined only to the walls of his convent; his name was spoken of everywhere, amongst those who were devoted to the same life with himself. Of these great numbers flocked to Nutselle for the benefit of his instructions, especially in the Sacred Scriptures; and with them, as with the brethren of his own house, he went through many books of Holy Writ, teaching and expounding them fully. But withal he found time for other studies also; he had acquired proficiency in grammar and rhetoric, and was well skilled in the composition of verse, and knowledge of metre. This, when we consider the wide range of subjects which were then taken along with, and reckoned under, the study of the Sacred Volume, would comprise most branches of learning which were then accessible. But in addition to all these his daily tasks, there remained yet more from which, in obedience to the monastic rule, he never thought of shrinking. He was sedulous in his attendance on the daily offices in the Church;

and apart from them, a portion of each day was given to manual labour.

It is a picture of no light toil, no small self-sacrifice, which is here brought before us. The setting aside of all earthly hopes, the parting with all human ambition, the giving up the ties of kindred and of home, required no little self-denial from one to whom, born to wealth and a noble name, the path was open to that honour and power which worldly men hold dearest to them. It was, indeed, a high calling, but an arduous one, thus to choose poverty in place of luxury, thus to give himself to constant labour, and vigil, and fast, while the power was yet his own to enjoy the things of this life, and they whom he most loved were luring him to do so. But he had cast in his lot, he had shown himself ready to obey the will of God, and he was presently, as a reward, to be called to higher deeds, and higher sufferings. To him that hath shall more be given; and even so he that has suffered and laboured for CHRIST's sake, shall be called to go through more, that so he may obtain a higher crown of glory.

So passed away year after year, in his unobtrusive monastic life; unknown to the world, he was adding to the strength and the graces of his character. He was now full thirty years of age, and by the election of the Abbot and the brethren, was chosen to fill the sacred office of the priesthood, about the year 712. His desire was now to give himself yet more to prayer, to reading, and to exhortation. To preaching he gave especial attention, being very eloquent and learned, especially in the exposition of the Parables; and in

his sermons he sought neither to flatter the rich and powerful, nor to terrify the poor and weak, but accepting no man's person to declare fully the counsel of God.

About this time a Synod was held in the kingdom of the West Saxons, with the concurrence of King Ina. What the especial cause of its meeting was is not apparent; but it seems that under some pressing emergency the bishops of the churches summoned this synodical council. After their deliberations were ended, they resolved to send a deputation from themselves to Berctwald Archbishop of Canterbury, who in the year 693 had succeeded<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Theodore in that see. And on the inquiry of King Ina, who was present, as to whom they proposed to send on this embassy, Winfred was brought forward by the Abbots Winberct of Nutselle, Wintra of a house at a place called Disselburg, and Beerwald of Glastonbury. Within a few days he returned from his journey into Kent, bearing the Archbishop's answer, which ended the divisions that had arisen. But the mode in which he had acquitted himself of the charge was such, that frequently from this time he was invited to attend the Synods of the clergy, that they might avail themselves of the directions of one who showed so much of wisdom and of zeal.

But the time was now at hand that he should depart from his home at Nutselle. Thirty years had passed in a hidden life, a time of preparation for more active labours in the cause of CHRIST, as the sojourn in the desert of the great Lawgiver of the people of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 4.



He was to bid farewell to the calm quiet of the monastery, and brave perils by the sea and in the wilderness among a strange and unknown people. But he had counted the cost ; he knew what he had chosen, and he looked not back, when he felt that he was bidden to go forwards.

## CHAPTER II.

WINFRED'S FIRST JOURNEY INTO FRISIA, AND HIS RETURN  
TO ENGLAND.

A.D. 713—A.D. 718.

“I said, I will water my best garden, and will water abundantly my garden bed : and so my brook became a river, and my river became a sea.”

NEARLY four years appear to have passed away after his ordination to the priestly office, and Winfred still continued in his home at Nutselle. The plans, which he had formed, were known to himself alone, and with constant prayer he was maturing his design, seeking to learn and to fulfil the will of God respecting him. At length he laid his whole mind before the Abbot Winberct. The announcement at first caused to him mingled sorrow and astonishment ; and he refused for the present to accede to his request that he might be permitted to leave Nutselle for a foreign land, in some hope that longer consideration might induce him to lay aside his purpose. But he had already shown that he was not one likely to shrink from any work or any office, only because it involved greater trial and more of self-sacrifice and self-denial : and the more that his mind dwelt on the miserable condition of nations which belonged to the same race with his own, living in the most utter darkness at so short a distance

from his own shores, the more he felt urged to betake himself to a field wherein, though ready for the harvest, the labourers were few or none. After a while however Winberct himself withdrew his refusal, and there was now no farther hindrance to his departure.

It was in the year 716 that amid the tears of the brethren and their prayers to God for him, he departed from the home of so many years, where he had endeared himself to all by the gentleness of his character, while his firmness ever secured him their respect, and where he had served God in peaceful quietness and seclusion. It must have been strange to one, whose days had passed in the same unvarying round of holy duties within the walls of his monastery, where his mind, however active and realising to itself the things going on in the world without, must in some degree have been influenced by the quiet tenor of his life, and must also, in its measure, have come to be content with it and to love it,—thus to be thrown on the stormy sea of human life in an age when more than ordinarily wars and commotions were on all sides raging, and no one could count on the continuance of peace longer than from day to day. He was this time attended by only two or three companions who journeyed with him to London, then known as Lundenwic: and from thence, having established his right of returning,<sup>1</sup> he made an agreement with the captain of a vessel, in which he embarked. After a safe and prosperous

<sup>1</sup> 'Transacto postliminio,'—the process by which any one going to a foreign country, claimed for himself the rights of a subject and citizen of the land which he was leaving; so that on his return he was reinstated at once into his former condition.

voyage, he landed at a place named Dorstadt. He was now in the Frisian country, a territory of much wider extent every way than that which is now comprised under the designation of Friesland :<sup>1</sup> and he at once commenced his missionary labours, not sparing himself night or day to advance the cause of CHRIST.

But although he gave himself thus untiringly to the work, his efforts, as human eyes might judge, were vain : it might be either that he required more training himself, or that, having been called into this the scene of his future martyrdom, he was yet awhile to remain quiet, until with greater strength and power he might return to reap a more abundant harvest. The whole country was convulsed by the war then being carried on by Charles Martel, Mayor of the Palace of the Frank king, against Radbod, king or duke of the Frisians. Radbod himself appears to have been a Pagan, as were by far the greater number of the people ; but in some parts the Church of CHRIST had already made its way, as is evident from the account given of the calamities and persecutions caused by this contest, that the Servants of GOD were driven away, and the Churches thrown down and demolished, while the idols were again set up and their worship every where renewed. Undeterred by all that he saw around him, Winfred obtained an interview with the Frisian chieftain, and besought permission for himself and his companions to preach the Gospel, if a field

<sup>1</sup> The nation was divided in the time of Tacitus into the "Majores" and "Minores Frisii." None of the German tribes opposed the power of Rome, and maintained their independence, with greater obstinacy and bravery.

were opened for their labours in his dominions. The request must have been made in vain, for shortly afterwards Winfred set out on his return to England, where he arrived before the winter of the following year.<sup>1</sup>

Once again, and for the last time, he was received with thankfulness and joy into his former home at Nutselle: it seemed as though he had undertaken a fruitless work, and was now come back to spend his days in the more quiet routine of the contemplative life. He resumed his former studies, and recommenced his former teaching; and probably the brethren thought that they should have him with them always. As the event proved, he had but returned to witness the last days of his master and teacher Abbot Winberct, who now in a good old age was wasting away not by any active disease, but the gradual decay of his bodily powers. With Winfred near him, and all his monks standing round, he meekly yielded up his spirit. It was now Winfred's part to guide and direct his fellow mourners, and though himself grieving for the loss of so valued a friend, he yet exhorted them to call to mind all the holy instructions of Winberct, while yet he was with them, and urged them to the election of another superior. The remembrances of all Winfred's past life amongst them, all the influence which he had always possessed over them, impelled them at once to fix their choice unanimously upon him. But they found him inflexible in his refusal; he was already contemplating a second departure, and he sought not the honour, which they were desirous of putting upon him. Yet was he now placed in most anxious

<sup>1</sup> Life by Willibald, chap. ii. 18.

and perplexing circumstances. The summer was passing by, and he was very desirous of setting off for his missionary labours before the ice of winter set in to block up the navigation ; still he shrunk from leaving his monastic home, before some one had been elected to be their superior, fearful of relaxed discipline and other evils which might happen while as yet there was none to rule over them. For a time he knew not what to do, or how to decide. In this difficulty they had recourse to the advice of Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, who presided over that See from the year of our LORD 705 to 723, who recommended them to select a man of good disposition and sufficient learning, named Stephen. And once more Winfred, being relieved of this anxiety, was free to betake himself to that work to which he felt that he had received an especial call. But this time he left his own land, to see it again no more.

## CHAPTER III.

JOURNEY TO ROME. MISSIONARY LABOURS. WINFRED RETURNS TO ROME, AND IS CONSECRATED BISHOP.

A.D. 718—A.D. 723.

“ Quid erat totus vitæ illius cursus nisi unus cum vigili hoste concursus ? ”—*S. Maximus. Hom. LIX. de S. Eusebio.*

BEFORE leaving Nutselle, Winfred had obtained letters commendatory to the Pope Gregory II., from Daniel, Bishop of Winchester; and then having finished his preparations he set off for London, whence he set sail for France, and landed at the mouth of the river Cuent or Canche, near the town of Estaples. There he remained for a while, at a place named Cuentavic, until his companions arrived who were to share his labours. When they were all assembled, they commenced their journey. The winter was now coming on, and their travel was likely to be a severe one, but previously they went round to many churches, putting up their prayers in each, that they might be preserved from all the dangers attendant on an Alpine journey, and for a safe and unmolested passage through the territory of the Lombards. Their prayers were heard, and all reached Rome safe and well. Arrived, their first care was to offer up their thanksgiving before the Altar of S. Peter. Hither then they hastened, and knelt

with joy where all Christians loved then to present themselves as in surety and token of a common faith, and where to kneel was as it were a pledge that they were in communion with all the churches of Christendom. Not yet had arrived those sorrowful times, although they were but too close at hand, when Christians were to be severed asunder. The period of that visitation was yet far distant for the western church, but the shadow of coming evil<sup>1</sup> was even now falling

<sup>1</sup> More than 300 years passed away from this time, before the final separation of the East and West; but during the whole of that period the intercommunion of the two churches was more or less interrupted. From the reign of Leo the Isaurian there was but a restless tranquillity, betokening the coming storm, until in the year 1054, Cardinal Humbert, legate of the Roman See, laid upon the altar of S. Sophia the sentence of papal excommunication which cut off the Patriarch Michael Cerularius and the whole Eastern Church, from the communion of the Churches of the west. The chief point involved in this memorable schism, so sad in its progress, so terrible in its results,—was the manner of the Procession of the HOLY SPIRIT, from the FATHER and the SON. The creed as originally drawn up at the council of Nicæa contained only the words “I believe in the HOLY GHOST:” but in order to refute the heresy of Macedonius, the second general council, held at Constantinople, added to the article the words, “The LORD and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the FATHER.” And the next general council, at Ephesus, decreed that it should not be lawful to make any addition to it as it then stood. Subsequently, the western church answered in the affirmative the question “Whether the HOLY GHOST proceeds from the SON as well as from the FATHER.” Nevertheless Pope Leo III. set forth the Creed graven on silver plates, in the same words in which it had been left by the council of Constantinople. More than half a century after this, the words “and from the SON” were admitted into the Creed by Pope Nicholas the First, who was on this account excommunicated by



in another direction. S. Willibald, afterwards the fellow-labourer of his uncle Winfred, was probably in his pilgrimage to Jerusalem among the last who enjoyed the intercommunion of the eastern and western churches, for already Pope Gregory had written letters of remonstrance to the reigning Emperor Leo III., known by the name Isauricus.<sup>1</sup> At Rome, however, no such calamities yet threatened, and Winfred and his companions rejoicingly laid their various thank-offerings before the Apostle's shrine; and not only there did they pray, but also they went round to all the oratories in the city, hallowed almost all of them by the most sacred associations.

Their praises having been offered up for their preservation during their journey, they remained quiet for a few days to recruit their bodily strength. After which Winfred presented himself before the Pope Gregory, the first of that name after the holy Father who had it in his heart to give himself to the work of converting England, and, being hindered in that, sent forth S. Augustine and his illustrious band. He recounted the various incidents of the journey, and explained the reason of his coming, namely, his great desire to carry the light of the Gospel among heathen nations, and before setting out upon that work, to obtain the Apostolical benediction. Gregory, imme-

Photius, the intruding patriarch of Constantinople; still the communion of the two churches was as yet only suspended; nor did the final severance take place until the chief bishop of the western church proceeded to excommunicate the patriarch Michael, in the manner already noticed.

<sup>1</sup> Lives of the English Saints. Family of S. Richard, p. 60.

diately fixing on him a favourable yet searching glance, demanded of him whether he had brought letters of commendation from his Bishop. Winfred produced the letters, which he kept by him carefully folded up, and presented them to Gregory, who then signed to him that he might depart. The letters of Bishop Daniel proved abundantly satisfactory, and the Pope thenceforward took frequent counsel with him, and constantly requested his company, till the summer drew on when the missionaries could leave Rome for their purposed labours.

April was now past, and early in May Winfred begged letters from the Pope and his blessing. In the letters he was directed to examine the condition of all the nations of Germany; he appears at the same time to have received legatine powers, whatever may have been their extent, for he alleges the possession of them subsequently as a reason for not assenting to the wishes of S. Willibrord. Winfred and his companions immediately prepared to start. During his stay at Rome, we are told that he had gathered together a great quantity of relics; portions of which were probably given to the churches which he founded. The subject of relics has roused much bitter controversy and evil feelings; it is not our province here to enter on any lengthy disquisition respecting them. Thus much we may say that, whatever wrong conclusions or abuses men have been led into in this particular, it is no more than we are exposed to in many other things also; the preservation and use of them is no where condemned or even spoken against in Holy Writ. The bones of Saints of the Old Testa-

ment are recorded as possessing virtues ; it cannot therefore be in itself unreasonable to expect that the relics of Saints under that better covenant, of which the old was but a shadow, should, at certain times, or under certain conditions, be endued with power as great, if not more. If it were not wrong to bear to the sick for their healing, handkerchiefs which an Apostle had touched, surely the question regarding their use, as one of abstract lawfulness, is completely laid at rest. And as surely even natural feeling would lead to the preserving and valuing of them. The tokens and remembrances of absent and departed friends are very dear to us, and rightly so ; and shall we think less of the memorials, few and slight, of those who have fought as good soldiers and endured hardness and persecution and even death itself for the sake of CHRIST, whose names are household words and their praise in all the churches ?

After their departure from Rome the missionaries presented themselves to the Lombard King Liodobrand or Luitprand, who reigned over that kingdom from 712 to 743 : and were by him hospitably entertained, —at what place it does not appear. Elsewhere, he appears to have had his residence at Ticinum. Thence, strengthened by their rest, they set out on the toilsome passage of the Alps, after accomplishing which they traversed the territories of the Bajoarii or Bavarians, and finally reached Thuringia.

What the precise condition of these several countries at that time was, it is not easy to determine. They are described in different places, in terms which betray some discrepancy, sometimes implying that

they were altogether heathen, sometimes rather inferring that they had relapsed after a partial conversion. Probably the accounts must be reconciled by supposing that they apply to different portions of the country. Thuringia appears in great part to have received the faith at an earlier period, but the people seem to have had a very confused and miserable notion of Christianity; yet his work there, so far as we can judge, was rather one of renovation than entire conversion. He found there many clergy, priests and others, some of whom were diligent and devoted in the service of God, but far the greater number had lapsed into much corruption and sinfulness of life. Before these he set their high calling, and all the duties which it involved, and strove earnestly to bring them back into the Apostolical discipline. When visiting the same parts on a subsequent occasion,<sup>1</sup> he found very much the same condition of things. This was probably in great measure owing to the miserable intestine division, by which the country was convulsed, in some parts to so great a degree that even the profession of Christianity was almost abandoned. They were likewise subjected to the corruptions of wicked teachers, of whom four (whose names are given as Torchtwine, Berchtere, Fanbercht, and Hunred,) are mentioned as given over to an unclean life, and endeavouring to introduce all manner of heresies among the people; their utmost efforts were moreover spent in trying to raise a tumult against Winfred, but happily without effect. These internal commotions are noticed in the life of S. Gregory, vicar-general at Utrecht, where it is stated that

<sup>1</sup> Life by Willibald, chap. iii. 35.

the people was partly Christian, and partly Pagan, and that these two portions were at continual strife with each other. Connected with this subject, we shall have occasion to notice a narrative concerning two of Winfred's predecessors in the See of Mayence, which gives a painful picture of the false estimation in which the sacred orders of the Church were held.

But even this partial and corrupted Christianity does not appear to have existed in Frisia; or if so, it was confined to some insignificant parts. They are every where spoken of as savage and intractable Pagans. They could lay claim to little or no civilization. The physical condition of their country indeed was likely to keep them back, being full of marshes and intersected in every direction by rivers small and large; they therefore either remained entirely isolated, or had but an uncertain intercourse with each other by means of boats. The account of the martyrdom of S. Boniface will show that the nation of the Frisians was composed of a number of subordinate clans, liable to all the sudden rancour and strife which such a state of society is ever likely to stir up. With little or nothing to bind or consolidate them, the establishment of any regular government would be hopeless: in default of which it only became the more difficult to bring any influence, even that of the Christian faith, to bear upon them. Like all nations made up of such ill assorted materials, they seem to have been greatly imbued with treachery and duplicity—probably valuing themselves highly for a scrupulous regard to their words when once sworn in solemn compact, but thinking that before such were given, they were free to

exercise any amount of craft, falsehood, and cunning.

A precarious existence, liable to constant famine, and other calamities, would go far towards rendering them reckless and dauntless: and the very qualities which shone forth with such lustre when hallowed by the heavenly grace, in their natural condition only rendered them more rancorous and terrible adversaries. It seems not easy to realize the fact that such utter barbarism existed almost alongside of the fast growing empire of the Franks, which already showed forth so much promise of future greatness. But so it was.

Here then we are told that Winfred had to labour among a people utterly given over to idolatry, and, when turned away from it, disposed constantly to relapse. He had to wage war with idols, throwing down the images, and destroying their temples. Various places were devoted to the worship of particular demons, whose religion was probably strictly local, as with the gods of the ancient heathen world.

At Eichsfeldt honours were paid to an idol named Stuflo, which has left its name to a hill called Stuffenberg. He therefore went up to the idol and commanded the demon, in the name of JESUS CHRIST, to depart. Local tradition avers that it fled at his command and took refuge in some secret cave, which they still call Stuffsloch.

But not here only were Winfred's zeal and boldness shown against idolatry. A Lutheran preacher would not probably be too much biassed towards taking a favourable view of his acts; yet we have the evidence

of one, the writer of a Life of Charlemagne, who states that after the overthrow of the last mentioned idol, S. Boniface went towards Gottingen, and there tried to throw down a temple of Fortune, but being prevented by the fury of the heathen, thence went into Frisia, through the territory of Hildesheim, and near Brunstein threw down an idol of the name of Retto, which, the writer affirms, gave the name to the hill called the Rettersberg. Afterwards, at Katelnberg he threw down another named Biel, or Baal, at a spot now called Bielstein; next at Osterod he cast down one called Ashtaroth; after which, returning to Bielstein, he found the idol again set up and worshipped; but once more he succeeded in hurling it down, and this time also extirpated its worship.

But the mention of idols and idol worship creates a difficulty when we attribute it to a nation which the Roman historian described as by no means chargeable with it. "To confine their gods within walls," are the words of Tacitus, "or to fashion them into any resemblance to the human countenance, they hold to be inconsistent with the greatness of heavenly beings: they consecrate woods and groves,<sup>1</sup> and call by the names of the gods those sweet solitudes which they look upon with simple reverence." In this way it must be that Tacitus himself speaks of their offering

<sup>1</sup> The following is a law on this subject, of Luitprand, king of the Lombards, "qui ad arborem quam rustici Sanctivum vocant atque ad fontanas adoraverit aut sacrilegium vel incantationes fecerit, componat medietatem pretii sui in sacro palatio."—*Lipsius, in Tacit. Germ. cap. ix.*

worship to Mercury, Hercules, Mars, and Isis. Their names were probably not those of the Roman mythology, but only their equivalents. The instance already given of the worship of Ashtaroth, as evidenced by the local appellation of Osterod, points rather to a Phœnician origin, and that their gods retained their Phœnician names, as proved also yet more by the example "Bielstein." In a precisely similar manner Dartmoor, in Devonshire, retains many Phœnician names; Hessarytor is the tor of the war god Hesus, Mistor that of Mithras, Beltor that of Bel or Baal: the people still talk of the Beltane tree, and kindle annually the Beltane fires.

When then we read of the overthrow of idols by the missionaries of the Christian Faith, it either means some tree especially set apart to a particular god, (as we are expressly told that S. Boniface threw down some,) or we must suppose that it was some erection of stones, rudely piled together, which served either as its temple, or was symbolical to the worshippers of the divinity which they sought to adore. The supposition is not so likely that in the lapse of six hundred years their paganism assumed a different form, being converted from a worship of certain gods, either invisible, or at most only symbolized,<sup>1</sup> to the setting up of actual forms, whether of men or animals, because there does not appear to be any evidence of a corresponding change in the national character. We may therefore conclude that along with the same

<sup>1</sup> When Tacitus mentions that they worshipped Isis, he adds that it was under the form of a *ship*: and thence concludes that the whole religion had a foreign origin.—*Germany*, chap. ix.



mode of idolatry they retained also all the ancient rites for propitiating their gods, by divination, augury, casting lots, and also not unfrequently by human sacrifices.<sup>1</sup>

Winfred was indeed the most illustrious labourer amid these barbarous and miserable tribes; but the soil had been in part prepared for some time before he himself came to these regions; and one saintly Bishop, with whom Winfred was himself afterwards associated, was even then striving to bring the heathen to the knowledge of CHRIST. The harvest yielded to him the most abundant fruits; but other men had laboured, and, as it had been of old, he was now entering into their labours. We learn from Bede,<sup>2</sup> that a Priest named Egbert had had the conversion of these nations at heart; but having come to the resolution of giving himself to the work, had been called away to the monastery of Saint Columba, in the Island of Huy or Iona; and that, when he was hindered from going, Wictbert, one of his companions, who had been a hermit in Ireland, came into Frisia, and preached to the people and to their King Radbod for the space of two whole years; but reaping no fruit of all his great labours, he returned to his former home, A.D. 690.

In the same year two priests of the English nation, both of the name of Hewald, had suffered martyrdom in the province of the Ancient Saxons, whose bodies were afterwards brought and buried in the city of Cologne. But Egbert was still filled with the desire of advancing the great work which his own hands

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, Germany, chap. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Eccl. v. 9.

might not undertake, and he induced some holy men to engage in it, among whom was Willibrord. He, with twelve companions, arrived in Friesland, and laboured with some success among the idolatrous people. Soon afterwards he went to Rome, that he might receive the blessing of Pope Sergius for the work which he had undertaken. Meanwhile, the brethren who were in Friesland chose a man out of their own number, named Swibert, and sent him into England to Wilfred, Bishop of Hexham, who consecrated him Bishop for that mission. Willibrord himself returned to Frisia, and laboured for some years, till, returning to Rome in the year 696, he was consecrated Archbishop over the nations of the Frisians by Pope Sergius, in the Church of S. Cecilia. His See was fixed at Wiltenburch, near Utrecht: and thither returning, he continued his labours, building many churches and monasteries, and presiding over his diocese for about fifty years.

With S. Willibrord, Winfred was now to become a fellow worker. He had already been some time in France, and there received the intelligence of the death of Radbod, the King of the Frisians: and one great impediment was thereby removed to the spread of the Gospel. He joined Willibrord A.D. 720, and remained with him for three years, submitting himself entirely to his commands. The authority of Charles Martel was now very generally acknowledged among the Frisians, and their way was consequently more free from the hindrances by which, on his previous sojourn there, he had been impeded. Numbers of heathen temples and consecrated places were thrown

down and polluted, and churches and oratories erected in their place. Gladly would they have dedicated to God of the spoils taken from the enemy, for it was ever the care of the earliest preachers of the Faith to convert, if possible, the temples of the heathen into the holy places of the true God. Such was S. Augustine's desire in England; so doubtless would S. Willibrord and his companions have acted in Germany, had not the structures been utterly useless for the purposes of the Christian ritual, consisting probably, as has been already noticed, of mere stones rudely piled or heaped together.

But S. Willibrord was now growing old; he had ruled his diocese for nearly thirty years, and he felt that he should soon be unable to carry on so great a work by himself; and he cast his eyes around for a successor, who might be his suffragan Bishop while he lived, and succeed to the archiepiscopal dignity when he himself was taken from this world. He therefore summoned Winfred and told him his wishes on the subject, and besought him for his own sake and for the people that he would consent to receive the episcopal consecration. He was, however, steadfast in his refusal. We might at first be inclined to wonder why he should be so, and what could make him thus inflexibly refuse an office at the hands of S. Willibrord which he accepted without hesitation but shortly after elsewhere. We cannot perhaps entirely understand why he should so have acted—why he should not have wished to become a Bishop just then; but, it would seem, he felt that his obedience to the Pope was a prior consideration. When at Rome, he had placed

himself at the Pope's disposal, and he did not think that he had now any right to act as though he were independent of his authority. But S. Willibrord still continued very urgent, constantly entreating him to reconsider the matter; until at last Winfred, to be relieved of further importunity, was obliged to ask his permission to depart on his original mission. He urged that he was still Apostolic Legate, and that on his journey to the parts whither he had been sent he had of his own will joined himself to Willibrord, and submitted himself the whole time to his direction, and that therefore he could not consent to be elevated to so high and important an office, without first consulting the Apostolic See and receiving its consent. He also expressed his desire that he might now be allowed to proceed to those other regions which were embraced in the tenor of his commission, as well as proposed to himself in his own original purpose. It must have been a sorrow of heart to the aged Bishop to part with one so zealous and so full of wisdom, but he at once gave way, and yielded up his own wishes at Winfred's solicitation.<sup>1</sup>

He now commenced his journey, and sojourned first at a town called Amanaburg, about the locality of which it is not easy to decide; it may have been Hamburg, or Homburg, which was at no very great distance from the Frisian territories; or else it might be Amalburg, a town not far from Marburg, in the territory of Hesse Cassel. This town was governed by two chiefs, whose names were Detdic and Dierolf, but both they and their people had fallen into a species of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 5.

idolatry, while yet in a confused manner they made a profession of Christianity. By whom especially they had been instructed, does not appear—probably by one or two solitary brethren, who may have won the crown of martyrdom, but who had not time sufficient to strengthen them in the Faith, nor were enabled to leave successors who might instruct them more fully. By his teaching and exhortations Winfred gained these back, expounding to them the faith more perfectly, and, to prevent further relapses after his departure, he built a monastery, and left several brethren to watch over their spiritual welfare.

From Amanaburg Winfred went and preached among the Hessians, and reaped there too an abundant harvest, baptizing many thousands. He had now been the instrument in the hands of GOD for accomplishing a very mighty work; many who had lapsed from the Faith he had recalled; many who were weak and ill-instructed, he had confirmed and established; to many more he had brought the true light, who had until then been plunged in heathen darkness. It was fitting, he considered, that such joyful news should be known in the metropolis of Western Christendom, that so he who had given his blessing and authority to the work should be made aware of how great things GOD had wrought by the hands of His servant. Winfred's own heart overflowed with love and thankfulness at having been enabled to admit so many thousands, until then captives to the devil, into the adoption of the sons of GOD, by becoming members of the Body of CHRIST; and accordingly he longed to share his joy with him to whom he owed gratitude as well as, of his own free

choice, obedience. Besides, with so many new churches demanding his care, with so much to make his mind anxious, so many emergencies to be provided for, so many difficult questions of practical casuistry to be solved, he had need of all the advice and consolation which he could obtain. The Apostle of England in similar circumstances did not hesitate to propound many questions concerning the peculiar requirements of the infant Church which he had founded to his spiritual father, the great S. Gregory ; the Apostle of Germany might well, in like manner, betake himself to the guidance of his adopted father, the second of that time-honoured name. He therefore wrote letters recounting all the great success which had been vouchsafed to him, and setting forth the various subjects on which he desired the counsel of the Roman Pontiff. These he entrusted to the hands of Binna, a fellow servant of God, in whom he could place full confidence. Binna hastened to Rome, and within a little while returned to Winfred with the answers of the Pope.

By these he found that the holy Pontiff desired his personal appearance in Rome, and, in unquestioning obedience, he set forth on his journey without delay. The autumn was shedding its many-coloured hues over the country, when, accompanied by his band of faithful brethren, he set his face towards the south. Once again they traversed the Alpine heights, and from those glorious mountains, whereon of old an invader stood with his mighty host before the torrent of his war poured down, they looked forth upon the beautiful plains of Italy. There lay spread out before them the fertile kingdom of the Lombards, while beyond,

the range of the Apennines stood up as a screen before the fair valleys of Tuscany. All these they traversed, until at length, clustered on its seven hills, they beheld afar off, the Eternal City. Their eyes rested not then upon the stupendous dome which now overshadows the Apostle's tomb, arresting the glance of the traveller in the far distance; but, more dear than this, the mighty fabric of a later age, was the simpler edifice wherein the first Bishops of this renowned city had worshipped and now lay in their long sleep, hallowed as it was by all the priceless associations of the springtime of the Christian Church. We cannot realise the thrill of thankfulness and delight unalloyed with which the wearied missionaries must have gazed down upon the then centre of the Christian world, as it lay reposing in its beauty beneath them. There were no sorrowful thoughts of division, of ties long cherished and deeply valued rent asunder, to trouble and vex their minds—no sad regret that this, the home of the Mother Church of the West, was yet not their home—that there, while others still knelt as her children, they must be looked upon as come of an alien race, and that it did not rest with them to make it otherwise. All these, the sad results of a colder faith and weaker love, forced on by departures from ancient laws and customs and teaching, were not there to cast a shadow over their souls. With joy they hailed the shrine of S. Peter from afar, with eagerness they hastened towards it; thither first they repaired, before any bodily wants were cared for, before they were even thought of, and poured forth the humble praise of a grateful heart. Four years had passed away since last they had knelt

within those holy walls; and how many things great and wonderful had they not seen and done since last they paid their vows before the shrine of the great Apostle? Then they went out into a strange country, not knowing what might befall, whether God would indeed prosper the work which for His sake they had undertaken, or whether it was His will that they should labour without reaping any fruit of their toil. And now they were returned, with a great work begun which they trusted to be able to carry on yet further. We might almost suppose that, after so much done, they might have thought of rest, as though the work had been accomplished. As much had been effected in those few years as we might imagine sufficient for the work of a whole life; but they had long ago laid aside all worldly hopes and expectations; they sought for no rest on earth save the peace of minds at one with the mind of God; and therefore, as they bowed themselves before the sacred altar, they did but ask for fresh supplies of the Divine Grace, that they might be enabled to labour yet more faithfully and more vigorously even to the end.

A few days they remained still and quiet, to recover themselves after their weary and toilsome travel; and then the information was carried to the holy Pontiff that Winfred was in Rome. He was received with welcome, and partook of the hospitality afforded to strangers. Shortly afterwards, Gregory having appointed to go to S. Peter's Church, Winfred was summoned to attend him, and there, within its holy walls, the Pope questioned him of the Apostolical Creed, and the traditions of the Catholic Church. To his



questions Winfred replied humbly, confessing himself too inexperienced thus to answer the holy father at once, but requesting time and leisure that he might deliver in his faith in writing. His prayer was granted, and within a few days he put into Gregory's hand an account of his faith, eloquently and learnedly drawn out. For the present there was nothing more to be done ; but in a short time he was summoned to the Lateran, whither he hastened, and fell before the knees of the pontiff, begging his benediction. Gregory raised him from the earth, and returned to him the paper which he had written. Winfred had amply satisfied the anxious watchfulness of the holy see, that there should be throughout all the churches not only right practice but orthodox belief. There was fear lest with much zeal and diligence in exhorting and teaching there might yet exist erroneous opinions, and so they might be tainting the stream, even while they were clearing the ground, that it might flow in a wider channel ; for so was it with many bodies separate from the communion of the Church, which pointed to the great things done by their own members. So was it then, so had it been even in the earlier ages of the faith. The Arian boasted of the confessors which his own sect had produced : the Manichees gloried that from their own body many had given themselves to be martyrs for the sake of the heavenly kingdom ; and doubtless numbers led holy lives and died holy deaths, such as might put to shame the careless lives of Catholic Christians : nay, at one time the heretics had boasted that the sanctity of their adherents equalled that of the Church, and that their numbers

were even greater. Yet undismayed the latter went on upon her own unerring way, simply setting before all the necessity of communion with herself, and teaching that holy lives and great actions availed not unless done in that only way which had been commanded,—that whatsoever might be the works accomplished by any out of her pale, they were irregular, and howsoever fair to look at, not of the same nature with works done in the church, because wrought in a self-chosen and unauthorised system. Therefore it was that the Bishops of the holy See so diligently demanded of all those whom they admitted to the exercise of holy functions these reiterated confessions of their belief, that so the faith and tradition of the Church might be taught and handed down uncorrupted from age to age.

When Gregory had approved the writing of Winfred, he caused him to sit beside him, and then exhorted him to continue ever steadfast in the faith even as he had now professed it, never swerving from it himself, and putting it whole and entire before others to the utmost of the powers which God had given him. Then they held long and intimate converse together, Gregory asking Winfred of the habits and dispositions of the people among whom he had laboured, with what spirit they had received the faith, and what seemed to him their capabilities for advancing in the Christian life: and Winfred recounting all that had taken place, his teaching and his success, and seizing the opportunity of obtaining fuller counsel from the holy Pontiff on all the various questions which lay nearest to his heart, regarding the guidance of his new made converts. Many an hour passed by

while still they talked with each other, until the sun was far down in the west; and then, thankful for the instruction and blessing of his father in the faith, Winfred departed to his brethren.

It was evident that vast numbers had been converted to the faith by him and his companions in Hesse, Thuringia, and other countries, over whom it was not possible that S. Willibrord could exercise due episcopal superintendence, and that therefore it was absolutely necessary to establish a new bishopric, that so the spiritual wants of those regions might be adequately supplied, and, if need were, new sees erected. Gregory therefore now intimated to Winfred his purpose of consecrating a Bishop for those parts, and that he had fixed upon him as the person. However unworthy he may still have considered himself for so high and arduous an office, however he may have shrunk from the heavier burden now to be imposed upon him, yet he acquiesced unhesitatingly in the pontiff's decision, and prepared himself for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, over those who were now wandering as sheep without a shepherd. The thirtieth day of November, A.D. 723, was appointed for his consecration: and in S. Peter's Church on the feast of the blessed Apostle S. Andrew, he was anointed by the hands of Pope Gregory to that holy office and in addition to the name of Winfred, was given to him the name of Boniface, as to Willibrord Pope Sergius had assigned the name of Clement when he consecrated him Bishop.<sup>1</sup> The Pope

<sup>1</sup> It is true, as is noticed by Alban Butler, in his *Life of this Saint*, that it appears from his letters he bore the name of Boniface

assured to him, and to all who should be under his spiritual control, communion for ever with the Apostolic See, and placed in his hands a volume of the Ecclesiastical Canons and Constitutions, with a solemn command that the whole discipline and order enjoined in them should be preserved whole and unmutilated through all the provinces subjected to his care: and that nothing might be omitted for want of due foresight and watchfulness, he exacted and received from him the following oath:—

“In the Name of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, in the reign of the Emperor Leo, and in the seventh year after his Consulship, and in the fourth year of the Emperor Constantine, his son, the sixth of the indiction, I, Boniface, by the grace of GOD Bishop, do promise to thee, O blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, and to thy vicar the blessed Pope Gregory and to his successors, in the name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT, the inseparable Trinity, and by this thy most sacred body, that I will exhibit the whole faith and purity of the holy Catholic faith, and by the help of GOD, will continue in the unity of the same faith, in which, beyond all doubt, the whole salvation of Christians is proved to consist. And that I will in no wise, at the persuasion of any, ever conspire against the unity of the general and universal Church, but, as I before said, will show my faith, and purity,

already, as he sometimes called himself Winfred Boniface, so that after all it could be no more than a confirmation of that name. Yet, as after this time the former name seems to have been dropped, whereas till then he had constantly used it, we have retained it in the narrative up to this the time of his consecration.

and obedience to thee and to thy Church, to whom the power of binding and loosing has been given by the LORD GOD, and to thy vicar before mentioned, and to his successors for ever. And, moreover, that if I shall discover any Bishops to be acting contrary to the ancient constitutions of the holy fathers, I will have no communion or connection with them, but the rather, if I be able to prevent them, I will prevent them ; and if not, that I will straightway give intelligence of the same to my apostolical master. But if, which GOD forbid, I shall attempt to do anything whatsoever contrary to the order of this my promise, in any manner, or on whatsoever occasion, or with whatsoever intent, may I be found guilty in the eternal judgment, may I incur the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, who presumed to keep back from Thee even of that which was their own. This record of my oath, I, Boniface, a humble Bishop, have written with my own hand ; and placing it above the most sacred body of S. Peter, have, as is before written, GOD being my witness and my judge, made this oath, which also I undertake to observe."

Then Boniface, prostrating himself at the feet of the holy Pontiff, besought all the clergy to offer up their prayers in his behalf, that he might be held worthy to end his days in peace ; and then all straightway, with one accord, bowing themselves before the relics of S. Peter, offered up their petitions to GOD for him as he had desired. After this, Gregory is recorded by the writer of one of the lives of S. Boniface, to have addressed him. It seems on the whole somewhat doubtful, whether the terms of the address were

such as he gives them ; yet we would not pass by anything which may throw any light on the thoughts and feelings of the Catholic Christians in those early ages. Gregory, then, is reported thus to have spoken, "Brother, thou hast heard and hast also thyself seen how many thousands in Germany are still sunk into the darkness and errors of idolatry, and of how many sons our holy mother the Church is defrauded, while the heavenly light is kept away from so great a family. Now therefore since thou art an upright man and well learned in our religion, take thou care for the salvation of this so great multitude, that thou mayest be enabled to carry back the talent, which has been entrusted to thee, doubled to thy LORD. Take therefore with thee the pastoral sling with the smooth stones of the Divine Law, that when that giant who has begun to devour all Israel shall vaunt himself as before a most certain victory, thou mayest run, a warrior like David, to meet the enemy of the human race. And if in this warfare there shall be offered to thee the crown of martyrdom, receive it willingly, nothing doubting that for the passing pain thou shalt obtain eternal riches." Thus was the holy solemnity ended, and the final exhortation given to him, who with all joy and eagerness was to go forth and to be made worthy in the end to receive that glorious crown of which the Pontiff spake. The letters were given to him in which Gregory commended him to Charles Martel, the real Sovereign of the Frank empire, and likewise to all Bishops and ecclesiastical persons throughout Germany.<sup>1</sup> And now

<sup>1</sup> The author of the third life of S. Boniface, in the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, states that he was consecrated Bishop by Gre-

there remained nothing more, but that he should be dismissed to go upon his weary yet welcome travel with the kiss of peace.

gory, at the express petition of Charles Martel (with other nobles of the empire) who, hearing of his increasing celebrity, urged him to go to Rome and receive the Episcopal consecration, and after much persuasion overcame the humility with which Winfred shrank from being raised to so high an office. There does not appear to be any especial authority for this statement. Boniface, it would seem, was not present at the court of Charles, till after this time.

## CHAPTER IV.

MISSIONARY LABOURS RESUMED. THIRD JOURNEY TO ROME.  
 BONIFACE RETURNS TO BAVARIA.

A. D. 723—A. D. 741.

“ Dominus elegit illum fungi Sacerdotio, et offerre Deo incensum dignum in odorem suavitatis.”

BONIFACE was now Apostolical Bishop, thus being made independent of all other Bishops except the Roman Pontiff; and on this account was even at this time styled Archbishop in the Apostolical letters. It was not, however, until a period long subsequent to this that he received primatial power over the neighbouring Bishops; nor does he appear for some time to have had any fixed see at all, that point probably being left to be decided as the circumstances of the newly founded churches should seem most to require.

Once more, then, Boniface set out from Rome with his companions, and came with his letters of recommendation to Charles Martel, by whom he was received with much reverence and kindness. He informed him in what countries he purposed to sojourn, for the purpose of spreading the Christian Faith, and asked his sanction to the course he intended to pursue. Charles Martel not only approved of all his designs, but also gave him a letter from himself, which would



secure him respect and protection throughout his dominions.<sup>1</sup>

But he had received letters from Pope Gregory, not to Charles Martel only, but to the various nations amongst whom he was to labour. The following gives a beautiful picture of the character of the Church's teaching at that time :—

“Gregory, servant of the servants of GOD, to the whole people of the Thuringians.

“OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, the SON of GOD, the True GOD, Who came down from heaven and was made Man, and deigned to suffer, and to be crucified for us, and was buried, and rose again on the third day from the dead, and ascended into heaven, said also to His holy disciples, Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST; and to them that believe, He promised eternal life: and because we desire that

<sup>1</sup> The Life of S. Gregory, Bishop of Utrecht, by S. Ludger, seems at variance with the account in the text. In it the visit of S. Boniface to Charles Martel is placed at a later date; he is first represented as having gone straight into Thuringia from Rome, and there winning great fame amongst all the people round about. His reputation extending itself as far as the French Court, and many of the nobles speaking very highly of him, Charles Martel began to entertain a great desire to see him. Boniface accordingly came, but was not received with the respect and attention of which he was deserving; the reason of this being that there were several enemies of his, described as false teachers and flatterers, who sought to prejudice Charles Martel against him, and who for a time succeeded in so doing. There appears, however, to be no more authority for this account of his connexion with the Frank ruler than for the one already noticed, which makes them meet before his journey to Rome in order to consult Pope Gregory.

ye may rejoice with us for ever, where joy hath no end, and where there is no sorrow, nor any bitterness, but glory everlasting, therefore we have sent to you our brother the holy Bishop Boniface, that he may baptize you and teach you the faith of CHRIST, and lead you from error into the true way, that ye may have everlasting life. But do ye obey him in all things, and honour him as your father, and incline your hearts to his teaching, because we have sent him to you, not that he may gather earthly riches, but that he may gain your souls. Therefore, love God, and in His Name receive Baptism, for the LORD our God hath laid up that which the eye of man hath never seen, or his heart conceived, in store for them that love Him. Depart from evil works and do well; worship not idols, nor offer sacrifices of blood, for God receives not such; but in all things observe to do according as our brother Boniface shall teach you, and build for him a house in which he may dwell, and Churches where ye may pray, that God may forgive your sins, and grant you everlasting life.”<sup>1</sup>

From the palace of the Frank ruler he went into the country of Hesse, and resumed his work of conversion and confirmation. But here he met with vehement opposition, the people not being inclined to give up without a struggle ancient customs and modes of life, to which they clung with the more tenacity in proportion as their heathenism had corrupted their hearts and minds. It is true, indeed, that it had not an equal hold upon all; there were many who were not chargeable with the abominations

<sup>1</sup> Patres Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ. Opera S. Bonifacii. Epist. vii.

to which the generality were given up; and with them the Faith of CHRIST found a more ready and easy acceptance; but as regards the others, the description given closely corresponds with the account of Tacitus. There was the same constant resorting to divinations of every kind, the same desire to interpret the future, whether by casting of lots or augury, by incantation, and omens, and other superstitious practices. The religion of the various tribes comprised in ancient Germany was neither a gentle nor a bloodless one, but it is more especially, perhaps, to the utterly degrading effect which such occult and unlawful arts have upon the mind, that their constant proneness to relapse into heathenism after conversion is chiefly to be attributed. But S. Boniface pursued the same course which the Church has ever followed in regard of idol worship and Pagan rites. The former in these countries (as has before been noticed) consisted most in the adoration paid to groves or particular trees or fountains; and he at once showed them that, although not made by human hands, yet were they no gods at all. In a place called Gicesmere, or Gesmere, in Lower Hesse, and not far from Schonenburg, was a huge and ancient oak, to which this superstitious reverence was accorded. This he approached for the purpose of cutting it down. A vast number of Pagans stood around intently watching, as the barbarians of Melita round S. Paul, to see some great destruction overwhelm the enemy of the gods; but Boniface and his companions had advanced only a little way towards cutting through the trunk, when the whole tree was on a sudden violently shaken, and shortly after fell,

the body parting into four equal divisions. At this sight (even as they who looked for the death of the great Apostle, when it came not, changed their minds,) so now from imprecating curses on S. Boniface as an impious and profane person, the people of Gesmere with one accord gave thanks to God. Out of the wood of this tree, with the advice of his companions, he built a wooden oratory, which he dedicated in honour of S. Peter the Apostle.

But there could now be for him no resting in one place, when so vast a field was to be traversed to gather in a heavenly harvest; and from Hesse accordingly he journeyed into Thuringia. The condition of this country has been described already, as one in which existed a confused and depraved Christianity rather than the pristine heathenism of the neighbouring regions. Here he laboured diligently, recalling the lapsed and instructing and strengthening the ignorant and weak, but, most of all, putting down numerous teachers of heresy, who went about confirming the people in their corruptions and introducing new ones of their own. From such as these he experienced a most bitter enmity; but in a little while they fled and were discomfited, and they of CHRIST's household divided the spoil. The Churches of the true faith began to supplant the groves of the heathen deities. A church was built at Erfurt; and now, in order that the field which he had cultivated with but few labourers, might be tended more carefully, S. Boniface began to found homes for those religious bodies by which in the earlier ages the work of the Church was so wonderfully advanced. Not far from Erfurt was

the little town of Ordorf, where, among the first, he stationed one of those bands of men who had given up all to labour for the Church of CHRIST in a foreign land. More labourers were being constantly required, and by the providence of GOD more were continually offering themselves for the work. S. Wigbert was the first who presided as Abbot over the house of Ordorf.<sup>1</sup>

But Boniface was ever gathering to himself new disciples to take part in his arduous but blessed labours. It was the manifestation of GOD's love towards him, and a token that his work was approved; and of GOD alone it came that he was so prospered. Still we may say of him that he possessed a wonderful natural power of impressing those amongst whom he came; men seemed to acknowledge his superiority as soon as they were made known to him, and sought to place themselves under his direction. It was in the year 725 that he paid a visit to the monastery of Palatiolum, near the city of Trêves, on the banks of the Moselle, over which presided as abbess a widow named Adela, sister of S. Irmine, who was abbess of the convent of Horreum, in the city of Trêves. They were both the daughters of Dagobert the Second, King of the Austrasian Franks. Alberic, the son of Adela, had left at his death one child, of the name of

<sup>1</sup> A few particulars are given in S. Ludger's Life of S. Gregory respecting the places in which S. Boniface resided at this period of his life, not to be found elsewhere. We are told that he stationed himself at Wyrda, near Utrecht, then at Attingohem, next at a place called Felisa, probably Velsen, near Haarlem.—See *Acta Sanctorum* (Bolland.) Junii 1, 487.

S. Wigbert was afterwards Abbot of the monastery at Fridislar, or Frislar, and died A.D. 747.

Gregory, who had recently returned from school to his grandmother, being now in his fifteenth or sixteenth year. Here S. Boniface, according to his wont, celebrated the Blessed Sacrament in the church ; and after it, as they sat at dinner, some one was required to discharge the office of reader whilst the meal continued, and the choice fell upon Gregory. The Sacred Volume was placed in his hand, and the benediction given, and when his task was accomplished, Boniface, struck with the countenance and manner of the boy, said to him, " You read well, my son, if you understand what you read." Gregory replied that he thought he did, and, on the request of Boniface that he should explain the meaning, commenced reading afresh from the beginning. Boniface then told him that he wished to hear the subject of his reading propounded by him in the language of ordinary conversation, that so those who were present, and did not understand the Latin which he had been reading, might be able to comprehend. This, probably from ignorance of the Teutonic language, he professed himself unable to do, and Boniface asked him, " Do you wish, my son, that I should show it to you?" The boy expressed his desire, and was now told to recommence reading what he had already gone through ; and when he had read a little way, the holy prelate interpreted the Scripture in the language of the country. What portion of Holy Writ it was we are not told ; most probably it spoke of self-denial and the conquering of earthly desires, for not only did it sink deeply into the heart of Gregory, but he instantly formed the resolution to devote himself to the service of the Church in missionary labours, and to

follow S. Boniface. He went at once to his grandmother Adela, and expressed his wishes to her. She herself had forsaken the world, but possibly after the objects of old affection had been taken away from her, rather than from a voluntary renunciation of happiness, which yet she had the power of enjoying in the world: and her heart yet clung, perhaps even more than she was herself aware, to those who still remained as the tokens of her former love. She could not consent to part with him in whom was brought before her again the image of her own son, and therefore she forbade him from following his intentions. Doubtless she would have acted a higher part by giving up the child who might be the consolation of her old age, and moreover she might well have trusted that the loss of him would be made up to her according to the promise, that they who have given up such shall receive manifold more even in this present life. But something of the impetuosity of youth and strength seems to have mixed itself up with Gregory's desire to lead a higher and more arduous life, for he replied to her solicitations and commands that he should remain, "If you will not give me a horse that I may ride with him, I will certainly follow him on foot."

It came to pass indeed that Adela presently changed her mind, whether it were that she saw the fitness of the boy for the life which he had chosen, or that her heart was nerved to the parting; and it is true also that we should be very cautious in judging of the particular sayings and actions of those who have been called to serve God in ways of especial difficulty and self-sacrifice in the Church; we cannot be sure that what

seems harshness and self-will to us, was really what it appears to be. But this we know, that there can be no inconsistency in Truth; a moral command must be binding upon all in every age and of whatsoever condition: and therefore if Gregory, in so speaking, put aside for the time the honour and reverence and submission due to parents and to those who are set over us, we may not dare to speak of the act in other terms than those which properly belong to it. We cannot hope to find any without spot or blemish in this mortal life, much less may we look for such excellence in those who are but starting for the race, and girding up their loins for the warfare. The less reason, then, there seems to be why we should be pained or scandalised when we come across such sayings or such actions in the lives of those who afterwards fought the good fight of faith unwaveringly and unshrinkingly. We may, indeed, still think that they occur too often, and yet we should not go on to conclude that the Church of CHRIST ever justified the smallest deviation from what our LORD taught, or the holy Apostles after Him. Some few instances, therefore, of apparent self-will and obstinacy in urging the desire even for the ascetic or contemplative life can never outweigh the example of Him who, through the whole of His sinless childhood, was subject unto His parents, though one of them was so in name only and He was LORD of All. This one thought, however, should be always present with us, that it is no light or easy matter to decide what is the precise meaning or nature of an isolated act in the history of a Saint. Many an action which appears at a distance distorted, and inconsistent with



a saintly character, might, if we could only behold what went before or followed after, assume an harmonious and consistent shape, as it falls into its proper place. It may seem too much of a digression to dwell thus long on a single expression of a disciple of S. Boniface, but in the present general condition of thought and feeling it appeared not uncalled for. The ordinary mode of regarding such subjects now is so different from the early one, there is so little chance now amongst us of any in early youth causing pain to their kindred by a voluntary abnegation of all earthly ties and the cutting off of all earthly intercourse, and we are so disposed to look upon our own tenor of life and action as the only one enjoined or commended in Holy Writ, that we approach such topics with minds ready to decide against what is at variance with our own predilections. Still it is undoubtedly our duty not to allow a departure from the intimations of Scripture, such as we might deem the one in question, to lead us to suppose that such a deviation is praiseworthy. Only let us take care that that is really a departure which we consider to be one.

The prohibition was now withdrawn, and the time for parting was come; the gates of the convent were thrown open, and the youth who had seen but fifteen summers issued forth with the more mature warrior who was now approaching nearer to the prize of his warfare—both going forth to fight the same battle, both by the grace of God to persevere to the end. The sacrifice which Gregory made was even greater than that of his master; he had been brought up in a palace, surrounded by the pomp of wealth and

power; he was just growing up into the prime of youthful vigour, with all his faculties of mind and body expanding to take in all the enjoyments which health and riches could bestow upon him; whereas Winfred, the child, had gone forth scarcely knowing whither he went, the voice of God within his guileless heart calling him out of a world of which he had not felt the enticements or experienced the pleasures. In all the journeys of S. Boniface, Gregory was now his companion, and, according to the measure of his years and capacity, the partaker of his labours. The life which they were both called upon to lead carries back our thoughts to the great Apostle who laboured, working with his own hands, that he might not be chargeable to any; they had to toil in hardship and poverty, and to live by the work of their own hands. Even in those regions which had been more or less converted to the Faith, there was everywhere strife, and war, and tumult. The surrounding pagan tribes made constant inroads, and they were often compelled to flee from city to city: for they held that they were bound not to seek out a time for martyrdom, however they might long to be made worthy of that glorious crown, but to wait in patience and hope for whatever God might order for them, and not to flee if again His will showed that the time for suffering was come.

But a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid: and humble and poor as he was himself and toiling hard in mind and body by day and by night, yet his name was in the mouths of all men; and well may we suppose that it caused a thrill of grateful pride throughout his own native land, and roused in many

the desire of taking part in so great and holy a work. The stream was now flowing from England towards the dreary regions of Northern Germany—dreary but for the heavenly light which had begun to shine upon them. Labourers more illustrious, whose names are preserved with honour, were borne thither in after years; but already numbers went out into lands unknown before, who filled the religious houses which Boniface was founding in each place where the Christian faith was planted, and which became little islands of freshness and verdure amidst the surrounding desert. The news of the great works, of which he had been made the instrument, had also spread joy and thankfulness over the declining years of his spiritual father, S. Gregory II. Well might he rejoice that he had sent no unworthy person to bring back the sheep wandering in the wilderness; well might he exult at the harvest which had been already reaped, while yet he yearned for the time when all, that still lay without, should be gathered into the Church's garner. But the accomplishment of that work his own eyes were not to witness: in the year 731 he was taken to his rest. The loss of those who have been loved and venerated must be a pain to every heart; yet with S. Boniface the sorrow must soon have yielded to the joy that one more had preceded him to the heavenly inheritance, and that his own time was drawing nearer. But though he was gone, yet another now sat on the throne of S. Peter, and to him, as to his predecessor, his allegiance was given, ready, cheerful, and unquestioning. There was, besides, much with which it was necessary that Gregory III. should

be made acquainted—the progress of the Church, the condition of the clergy, and other subjects—and many questions on which he desired to have his counsel and direction. He therefore sent his deputies to Rome, where they were received by the Pope with great respect and kindness. They laid before his feet the letters of his holy predecessor, and recounted all the kindness he had shown and the privileges which he had conferred upon S. Boniface and his companions. They bore also the devoted submission of their master to the Apostolical See, and his earnest longing to be continued in its communion and in the enjoyment of all the blessings accruing from it. All these the Pontiff guaranteed to Boniface and to all associated with him in his holy work, and added yet a further proof of his love and reverence for him, by sending him the Pall, the ensign of the Archiepiscopal dignity, without which the metropolitans did not enter upon the exercise of their functions. At the same time he sent also other gifts, and among them a number of relics of the Saints. With these the messengers joyfully returned to Boniface, who was now constituted primate of Germany, with the power of erecting new dioceses where necessity demanded; he himself, however, for some time still continued, as he had been while Bishop, without any fixed metropolitan see. They found him labouring in Hessia, where he now founded a monastery at Fridislar, or Frislar, the church of which was dedicated in honour of S. Peter and S. Paul. We have already noticed the establishment of a similar community at Hamanaburg, of which the church was dedicated in honour of S. Michael the Archangel.

Each of these houses, we are told, contained a considerable number of brethren.

From these the remoter portions of his province, he turned his footsteps to its more southern districts, and arrived in Bavaria while Hucpert, or Hugibert, son of Theodore, who died in 739, was sovereign of the country. This region, like Thuringia, was not now to receive the Christian Faith for the first time. Its people were rather to be recalled from corruptions and to be rescued from the influence of false teachers. Nearly forty years before this time S. Rupert had first broken in upon the kingdom of darkness to which they were held in bondage.<sup>1</sup> But his work was not so established during his lifetime as to prevent some relapses after he was taken away. S. Boniface went round to most of the Churches, reforming and strengthening them, and putting down the heretics who were corrupting the people. One of these was a schismatic, named Eremwolf, whom, according to the Ecclesiastical canons, he condemned and cut off from the communion of the Church.

To this period of his life probably belongs the following narration:—A certain Priest or Cleric, named Adelhere, who had been a faithful fellow-labourer with him, being advanced in age and very infirm, and feeling that he must soon depart out of the world, made over his own inheritance to the Church of S. Martin, at Mayence. But no sooner was he dead than his brothers Asperth and Truthmundt laid hands on all the property so consigned, that was situated in or near Amanaburg, Preitenbrunnen, or Seleheim.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 6.

When they were summoned before Boniface to answer for what they had done, they replied that they were ready to assert their right and title to it by oath. A day was fixed, and they with their partisans presented themselves before the Archbishop. When they made their companions advance to take the oath, Boniface interposed, saying, "Swear ye if ye wish it, but I am not willing that ye should destroy these also." When they had taken the oath, he said to them, "Have ye sworn?" and they replied, "We have." Then he said to the elder, "A bear shall slay thee," and to the younger, "Thou shalt never of thy seed look upon either son or daughter." The death of the former very soon came to pass as he had foretold; the other, terrified at the accomplishment of the prediction, restored the whole property of Adelhere to the Church of S. Martin.

Boniface still rejoiced to take frequent counsel with the good and holy men from whom he was separated by his absence from his native country; and amongst others he continued to correspond with Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, from whom he had obtained his letters commendatory before setting off on his first journey to Rome. From one of them, written about this period of his life, it appears that some of the infirmities of old age, induced probably by the severity of his labours, were already stealing on him; but the letter gives also a most vivid picture of his work, and of the difficulties which it presented.

"To my beloved Lord Bishop Daniel, Boniface, servant of the servants of God, wisheth health and charity in CHRIST.

“ It is customary with men, when any calamity hath befallen, to seek for solace and counsel from those on whose friendship or wisdom and faithfulness they place most trust. In the same way, trusting to your fatherly wisdom and friendship, I lay bare to you the troubles of a weary mind, and seek the counsel and solace of your piety. For, as the Apostle hath said, we have not only fightings without, and within fears, but there are also terrible battles within, by reason of false priests and hypocrites, who both fight against God, and destroy their own souls, and mislead the people with many scandals and errors, saying, ‘ Peace, peace, where there is no peace ;’ and the seed of the Word which we have received from the bosom of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, and endeavour to sow, they strive to choke with tares, and to change it into some pestilent herb. And what we plant they do not water that it may grow, but seek to pluck it up, that it may wither, teaching the people many errors, some abstaining from food which God hath made for man’s use, others feeding themselves on milk and honey, and rejecting bread and other food ; some also affirming (to the grievous hurt of the people) that homicides and adulterers, continuing in their sins, may yet be made priests of God. But the people, as saith the Apostle, will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. . . . Yet our labours with Pagans and the confused multitudes are but the outward battles ; the inward are when from the bosom of our mother the Church, any Priest, or Deacon, or Ecclesiastic, or Monk, departs from the true faith,

and breaking forth with the Pagans into contempt of the sons of the Church, becomes a fearful obstacle to the glorious Gospel of CHRIST. In all these things I seek your prayers for me, that I may finish the course of my ministry without loss of souls; and most fervently do I pray you to intercede for me before GOD that He who comforts the heavy laden may preserve my soul unhurt amidst these whirlwinds, and safe from sin. But I also desire your counsel as to holding communion with the fore-mentioned priests.

. . . . . For I remember how I swore on the body of S. Peter, when I was ordained Bishop, that I would hold no communion with such, if I should be unable to bring them back to the Canonical life. But I fear a greater loss in the way of preaching which I ought to afford to the people, if I do not come to the ruler of the Franks. What counsel and judgment in these things will your paternity give to your sorrowing and doubting son? . . . . .

“Yet another consolation for my pilgrimage I earnestly beg from your kindness—that you will send me the Book of the Prophets, which the Abbot Winberct, of blessed memory, my former master, left at his death, in which six prophets are comprised, written in a clear and simple character. If GOD shall put it into your heart to do this, you cannot send me a greater consolation for my old age. For in this country I cannot get a Book of the Prophets such as I desire, and with my dim eyes I cannot read small and contracted writing, and therefore I ask you for the above-mentioned book because it is written so clearly and distinctly. Meanwhile I send you by



Forthere, the Priest, letters and a small present in token of pure affection. It is a casula, not wholly of silk, but of goat's hair and silk mingled. Lately, also I have heard from a Priest, who has recently come from your presence, that you are labouring under a bodily infirmity ; but you, my lord, know well who hath said, 'Whom the LORD loveth He correcteth,' &c. And again, how S. Paul saith, 'When I am weak, then am I strong, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' And again, the Psalmist, that 'Many are the tribulations of the righteous.' You, my father, have (as Antony de Didymus is reported to have said) eyes which can see GOD and His angels and the glorious joys of the heavenly Jerusalem ; and therefore, relying on your wisdom and patience, I trust that GOD has sent this trial for the perfection of your virtue, and the increase of your merits, and that you may the more with spiritual eyes look upon and desire those things which the LORD commands and loves, and may the less look back upon that which He hath forbidden. For what in these dangerous times are bodily eyes than in great part (to speak truly) windows of sins, through which we look upon sins or on those who commit them, or (what is worse) admit sins within our own souls. I earnestly wish that your holiness may fare well, and pray for me in CHRIST."<sup>1</sup>

Another letter, addressed to the whole Church, shows yet more the value then set on intercessory prayer.

"Most earnestly I beseech your brotherly kindness to remember me in your prayers, that we may be

<sup>1</sup> *Patres Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ. Opera S. Bonifacii : Epist. xii.*

delivered from the snare of the hunter, and from wickedness; that the Word of the LORD may go forth and abound, and that by your prayers ye may endeavour to obtain from our GOD and LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who willeth all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of GOD, that He would convert to the Catholic Faith the hearts of the Pagan Saxons, that they may be delivered from the chain of the devil by which they are held captive, and may be added to the sons of the Church. Pity them, for they, too, say, 'We are of one blood and one bone with you.' Remember that the days of man are short, and none may confess GOD in the grave, nor shall death praise Him. Know also that in this entreaty of mine I have obtained the consent and benediction of two Pontiffs of the Roman Church. Now therefore so do by reason of my prayer, that your reward may be greater in heaven. May the eternal GOD preserve your unity and communion well grounded and increasing in CHRIST for ever."<sup>1</sup>

Thirteen years of successful labour had now passed away since Boniface had left the holy city of Rome to exercise his pastoral office. That Pontiff, whose blessing and friendship had been bestowed on him, was gone, and another sate in his place; still although nearly sixty years of age, he did not count himself to have no further need of counsel and instruction, or hold himself able to solve all difficulties, or to meet every emergency as it arose. On the contrary, it might appear strange that a man, who beyond all doubt exercised a most powerful influence on the

<sup>1</sup> *Patres Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ. Opera S. Bonifacii: Epist. xxxvi.*

character of those with whom he was placed in contact, should have displayed so much caution and even reluctance on very many occasions in coming to a decision. We might have supposed that a man of so much weight with others must have owed his authority in great measure to a readiness of mind which arrived at a conclusion while most men were only deliberating. Yet on several such occasions we find him altogether refusing to give a definite judgment before he had the sanction of a higher authority than his own. Had this proceeded from weakness, it could scarcely have been compatible with the wonderful reverence which was everywhere felt for him; more probably, all that were with him saw that a disposition which might naturally incline him to be imperative and decisive, was subdued into a guarded humility by which he sought ever to submit himself as much as possible to others,—that he was yielding not from a natural incapacity to do otherwise, but because he had chastened in himself the love of rule and superiority, incident generally to men of very marked character.

To obtain the counsel and instructions of Gregory III., and also for the purpose of asking the prayers of the churches in his behalf, S. Boniface, with many of his companions, in the year 738, set out on his third and last journey to Rome. As at the previous time, the shades of autumn were falling over the earth; but then he had little more than entered upon his warfare; now like the close of the husbandman's yearly toil, his own day was beginning to draw towards the end, although there was yet a good while before the going down of the sun. The fading leaves of the waning year were

now (if we may so speak) more in unison with the thoughts of the aged soldier of CHRIST, as he looked on his own failing body and decaying strength, than when, full of eager hope, and braced for the conflict, he was little more than girding on his armour before the battle. His hair was gray, his limbs must in his unceasing toil have lost some of their wonted elasticity ; but by the grace of God the hopes and longings of his early years had in good measure been fulfilled ; and as bodily vigour decreased, so in proportion the soul within enjoyed a clearer foresight of the glory to be revealed hereafter.

Once more then they traversed the same paths, once more they toiled over the rugged barriers of the Alps, once more looked down upon the rich and beautiful land that lay beyond them. Thankfully and gladly they hailed for the third time the holy Church of S. Peter, the home on which their love and obedience alike were centred ; and when their vows were paid, and their praises offered up, they came before the Pontiff, who received S. Boniface with great kindness and veneration. All indeed knew him now, and longed to behold the man whom God had chosen to be the agent of so mighty and blessed a work : and they held themselves happy who were admitted to his teaching and conversation. Many sought to see and hear him, even Franks and Bavarians, and also English, whether merely strangers sojourning in Rome, or belonging to the College, which long before this time had been founded there for their especial benefit.

In Rome S. Boniface spent the whole winter ; and in the following spring, bade farewell finally to the great

metropolis and centre of the Western Church. He had been round again to all the oratories, praying in them and begging the prayers of the Saints in his own behalf: he had received the parting benediction from S. Gregory; and enriched with more privileges and gifts, especially of relics, he went forth upon his way. In the city of Ticinum he tarried for a while with the Lombard King Luitprand, who was himself drawing towards the close of a long reign of nearly forty years; after which, having journeyed over the Alps, they bent their steps towards Bavaria, whither he had himself purposed going, and which he now did the more readily, being urged by a letter from Duke Odilo, who had just succeeded Hugibert. Here he accomplished much towards reforming the condition of the clergy, and recalling the people to the purity of the faith. Some of the former it seems had taken upon themselves the rank and the office of Bishops, either without consecration or uncanonically; others, with equal irregularity, had thrust themselves into the priesthood: and these (as might have been concluded) went on to add heretical teaching to their previous schismatical assumption of ecclesiastical offices.

But it was necessary now, not only to put aside these false intruders, but to place the country at once under effectual ecclesiastical direction. Salzburg, the Episcopal See of S. Rupert, had for some time been vacant, and there were no other sees throughout the whole of Bavaria. Boniface therefore proceeded to divide the whole kingdom into four dioceses, and over each he appointed Bishops, whom he himself consecrated according to the authority which had been

given to him by Gregory II., and confirmed by his successor. John was consecrated for Salzburg; while to the see of Freisinghein was sent Erembrecht, who was not however the first Bishop, as it had been already held by his brother S. Corbinianus, who had been made Bishop by Gregory II. Goibald (or Gaibald) was elected to fill the See of Regensburg or Ratisbon, the fourth being Tivilo for the Church at Passau.<sup>1</sup>

That many had come from England, both men and women, to share in the work which was being carried on by S. Boniface, has been already mentioned. Most of them he placed in monasteries and nunneries, thus planting little colonies of faithful Christians, who might convert the people who lay round them. Some of those who filled the Bishoprics which he established were Englishmen; such was Burchard, whom at this time he consecrated to be Bishop of Wurzburg, in Franconia, and such also was Willibald, whom he appointed to the same sacred office for Aichstadt or Eichstadt, in the palatinate of Bavaria.

This holy Prelate, whom the Church esteems amongst her Saints, was the son of that Richard, king or thane of the West Saxons, who has been mentioned as having married Winna, the sister of S. Boniface. He, too, like his uncle, received a conventual education, being sent when five years old, to the Abbey of Waltham, near Winchester. As he grew up into manhood, he formed the design of going on a pilgrimage

<sup>1</sup> Much about this time he established two other Sees, one at Erfurd, for Thuringia, another at Baraburg, for Hesse, now translated to Paderborn.—*A. Butler in S. Boniface.*

to the Holy Land, and, when in his twentieth year, obtained the Abbot's sanction to leave the monastery. Having prevailed on his father and his younger brother Winibald to accompany him, he departed with them and some other noble Saxons from England, in the year 720. The following year S. Richard died at Lucca, and the brothers stayed at Rome till after Easter, 723, when Willibald, with seven of his companions, proceeded on his pilgrimage, Winibald remaining at Rome, partly from weak health, and partly from love of the secluded and contemplative life of a monastery. Nearly four years he spent in Palestine, and afterwards two in Constantinople; and in the seventh year returned to Rome in the company of the Pope's nuncio and the legate of the Emperor. There he entered as a brother the great Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino. In the full vigour of manhood, after seven years of constant change and motion, calculated to unfit a man, as we might suppose, for the monotonous routine of a stationary life, Willibald submitted himself for ten whole years to the strict discipline of the Benedictine rule, which had recently been revived by the Abbot Petronax after the devastation of the Abbey by the Lombards. He had returned at once to his life at Waltham, as though no interval of years had passed between. And now, like the illustrious Winfred, after the calm preparation and quiet seclusion of a monastery, he was to spend his remaining days in a toilsome and vigorous action. It might seem a strange school to prepare for a struggle with the powers of heathenism; yet we may well doubt whether any other would have served better or

as well. In the year 739, a Spanish priest, staying at Monte Cassino, requested that Willibald might be permitted to accompany him to Rome. The permission was given; and they departed. Hearing that Willibald was in Rome, Gregory III. sent for him, and heard from him the history of his pilgrimage, which called forth tears from many who heard it, because they had done so little for the sake of CHRIST, while he had done so much. After long conversation, the Pontiff informed him of the request of Boniface, that his nephew should join him as a fellow labourer in the great work which he had in hand. He left Rome after Easter 740; and first visiting his father's tomb at Lucca, passed through Lombardy, and came to Odilo, Duke of Bavaria, who entertained him for a week. Thence he went to Hirsberg, where he was received by Count Suiger, who accompanied him to join S. Boniface at Linthrat. The Archbishop had already designed for his future Bishopric the territory of Aichstadt, which Count Suiger had made over to the Church; and he now sent him to examine it. Suiger and Willibald together having searched and fixed upon a site for a monastery, rejoined Boniface at Frisinga or Freisinghein. Shortly after, in July, he ordained Willibald priest, for the Church of S. Mary, at Aichstadt: and about Martinmas, of the year following, consecrated him Bishop at Salzburg, his newly-appointed suffragans, Burchard of Wurzburg, and Wizo of Baraburg or Burburg, also laying their hands upon him.

In the management of his diocese, Willibald followed the example which his uncle had set him. In every



quarter he established knots of men and women in religious communities, all of them under the rule of S. Benedict, as he had learnt it at Monte Cassino; while he himself lived according to the discipline of the same order with his fellow labourers at Aichstadt. Nearly forty years he had passed in a contemplative life, and he retained his affection for it still; but withal he was indefatigable in visiting and bringing in order every portion of his diocese. He was the chancellor and prolocutor in most of the councils held by S. Boniface, and was most esteemed by him, of all his suffragan Bishops, for eloquence and wisdom. But beyond this, the sketch of his life just given furnishes abundant proof of self-denial, humility, and poverty of spirit joined with undaunted resolution in adhering to the right path. He too, like the great Winfred, was one of those commanding characters, which never fail of having weight with all who are in contact with them: while both of them, being pre-eminent for bodily strength and beauty as well as for holiness, were the more fitted to carry the good tidings of the Gospel among rude and savage tribes such as those to which they came. Denying himself, he was abundant in almsgiving, constant in prayer and watchings, ever gentle,—the purity and charity within showing itself in his open and placid countenance, which yet could awe the guilty, while he sought to win him from his error.<sup>1</sup>

Beautiful indeed is the picture presented to our minds, as one by one, arise before us the blessed com-

<sup>1</sup> *Lives of the English Saints: family of S. Richard: Life of Willibald, p. 70, &c.*

panions of the saintly Boniface, invested each with their own peculiar graces, stars shining forth from out the dark night of heathenism, to guide the wanderer in the wilderness to the true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

## CHAPTER V.

DEATH OF CHARLES MARTEL. CONDITION OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY. SYNODS UNDER CARLOMANN: HIS ABDICATION. POPE STEPHEN AT THE COURT OF PEPIN.

A.D. 741—A.D. 752.

*“Sapientiam ejus narrabunt gentes, et laudem ejus annuntiabit Ecclesia.”*

AFTER a pontificate of ten years, S. Gregory III. departed to his rest, and was succeeded by Zacharias. The same year also closed the earthly life of the great hero of the battle of Tours. Charles Martel died on the 22nd of October, 741, leaving behind him a name memorable even amongst those of the few whose actions have been turning points in the world's history. Ten years before, and all Europe trembled at the dark cloud which, at first rising gloomily above the horizon, spread darkness and desolation in every quarter. The sword of the Saracen swept down with merciless fury every living thing that crossed its path; great part of Southern Europe had bowed down beneath the yoke of the infidel; and the resistless host of Abderahman rolled on like a whirlwind over the plain of France, vowed to carry the empire of the Moslem to the barren shores of the Baltic Sea. We can scarcely realise to our own minds that the plains of Tours and Poitiers, memorable again in later

English history, had witnessed the encampment of the unbelievers, that the white tents of the followers of Mohammed gleamed, like portents telling of woe and death, in the midst of that land which in but a little while was to be the realm of Charlemagne. On swept that terrible scourge, while slowly in the north the host was gathering together which, though but as one to a thousand, should crush the pride that had hitherto known neither check nor hindrance. For six days the two armies, on which rested, as men might think, the destinies of Christendom, prepared themselves in sight of each other for the dreaded yet inevitable conflict; and when at length the din of war broke upon that awful pause, it seemed as though the Christian armies must yield before the myriads of the Saracen. But never battle-field more witnessed to the truth that the victory is not always for the strong; and when the clouds of conflict rolled away, the Moslem hordes cumbered the ground whereon they thought to blast the final hopes of the Nazarene. Great indeed, beyond words to tell of, was the work accomplished, and in it the finger of God was manifested. It was a day of thanksgiving and joyfulness, with sorrow and mourning mingled, for thousands were weeping for the dead who had fallen in that fearful fight, which delivered Europe for ever from the dread of Mohammedan conquest. But the sorrow was swallowed up in joy, as prince and peasant, rich and poor, old and young, joined in the exulting *Te Deum* that echoed through every Church because now the enemies of God were smitten, and the Churches of CHRIST delivered from the fear of them. But not only is the name of Charles

Martel known as the leader of the Franks on that memorable day, but by him also was raised up in France a real and a powerful empire on the crumbling ruins of an effete and expiring dynasty. The Merovingian family had long since lost the power, and by the son of the victor of Tours they were to be deprived of the empty name of kings. It was now nearly three centuries since the great body of the Franks, led by Meroveus (or Merewig) into Belgic Gaul, had been consolidated into one kingdom by the victory of his grandson Clovis over Syagrius, count or chief of the Soissonois, A.D. 485. But the empire founded by that successful warrior (great as it was in extent of territory, spreading from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, and from the Alps to the ocean) was not of a nature likely to be very lasting. His own vast dominion was subdivided among his four sons; and the remaining reigns of that dynasty were little more than a struggle between the two divisions of the empire, Neustria and Austrasia, which had its origin in the lifetime of the sons of Clovis, and ended only when the Austrasians under Charlemagne poured in a fresh stream of life and vigour among the already degenerate Franks of Neustria. But apart from these factions, the Merovingian race contained within itself the elements of its destruction. Treachery and murder seem to have found in it a kindred soil to flourish in. The accession of each successive monarch involved the slaughter of all the nearest of kin; so that the ties of consanguinity, instead of being bonds of affection, became the cause of constant peril and terror; and the inevitable consequence of these fearful tragedies was the

frequent reign of monarchs who were mere children, while the real power was exercised by regents, who found it not very difficult, by pampering the appetites and passions of these miserable princes, to produce in them an imbecility and incapacity for government which should secure to themselves a continuance of their authority. This deputed power fell into the hands of the only magistrate existing in that rude age, the major domus, or Morddom, who combined the office of judge with the stewardship of the palace; nor was it long before this office, which was hereditary, grew to be more formidable than the sovereignty itself. Thus the office of major domus, and with it the real power of the empire, descended at the death of Pepin d'Heristal, in 714, to his grandson, Theodobald, then a child only eight years old; but this strange condition of things was summarily set aside by his natural son Charles Martel, so called as being the hammer which smote the power of the Caliphs in northern Europe. Having exercised the supreme power for a period of nearly thirty years, he left his authority to his sons Carlomann and Pepin conjointly, and for six years they continued to govern the kingdom together.

To S. Boniface these princes accorded even more than the friendship and protection which he had experienced from their father; and under their rule he presided over five synodical councils,<sup>1</sup> the decrees of which,

<sup>1</sup> The decrees of neither the fourth nor fifth council appear to be extant: three only are recorded as having been held amongst the new councils under Carlomann.—*Acta Sanctorum (Bolland.)*: Junii 1, 470.

aimed chiefly at reforming the condition of both clergy and laity. The latter had become much given to concubinage; many of the former too had contracted marriages, which he at once dissolved;<sup>1</sup> while the laity were compelled either to break off their unlawful connexions, or to enter into the married state.

As regards the former question, it would be out of place here to enter into any lengthened disquisition. In this case, as in another which we shall presently have to notice, it must be remembered that the members of any given body, voluntarily entering it, must be subject to the discipline which it enjoins; and we may not therefore speak of men, in whose option it was to refrain from entering holy orders, as harshly or oppressively dealt with because prohibited from contracting marriage. The restriction has never stood on any other grounds than those of discipline and expediency;<sup>2</sup> for it would be impossible to prove that the married state was essentially incompatible with the priesthood. But it would seem almost as difficult to maintain that it is not in the power of a Church to debar her clergy, who only voluntarily become so, from entering a condition of life which, although lawful, she holds to be not expedient for them. And such was no doubt the mind of the Church from very early ages, although her general and final decision was reserved for the pontificate of Hildebrand. There can be little question that in countries circumstanced as then were Frisia, Thuringia, and Bavaria, it would be next to hopeless to carry on the work of evange-

<sup>1</sup> Life by Willibald, III. 43.

<sup>2</sup> See Alban Butler in S. Paphnutius. September 11.

lizing the people and building them up in the faith, by means of a married clergy. For such it would be impracticable to penetrate the marshes and woods of those untamed regions, or to present that picture of a stern and unsparing self-abnegation, which would be absolutely necessary to impress a manly, yet savage people. It was not likely that the hardy and fearless Saxon, whose pastime was war and whose recreation was the chase, would be awed by men who, coming to them as the preachers of a self-denying and self-subduing faith, yet showed no example of suffering hardness beyond what they themselves, in their wild heathen condition, had already equalled or surpassed.

There was also much of heresy to be extinguished, and of superstition to be rooted out; and some were going about, endeavouring to introduce schism among the people. Among these was a Scotchman named Clement,<sup>1</sup> a man of vicious life, who asserted himself to be a Priest, and who with the rest was excommunicated.

Another was the impostor Elbrecht or Aldebert, who, pretending to very great holiness and also to the power of working miracles, led about a number of persons, whom he had hired for money to feign themselves maimed, or deaf, or blind, in order that by blasphemously invoking the Name of the Blessed Trinity, he might appear to restore them to health and to their former powers. He pretended likewise to know the secrets

<sup>1</sup> Clement was heterodox on the subject of predestination, and taught that all the lost souls were delivered by the descent of CHRIST into hell.—*A. Butler in S. Boniface.*



of the heart, gave his own hair and the parings of his nails as relics, and composed an autobiography full of pretended miracles and profaneness. So great was the delusion, it would seem, which he had managed to create, that he almost succeeded in gaining the credence of Carlomann himself. But Boniface strongly warned that prince against giving heed to the false speeches and pretended wonders of Aldebert, adding that he only sought his favour for the sake of getting money. Carlomann followed his direction; but the other still persisted in his wickedness, till at length Boniface determined to meet the heretic face to face, and confute his miserable errors. A day was appointed for the purpose; and the night before, it is recorded that S. Boniface dreamed that he was wrestling with a bull, and broke its horns. He received the dream on waking as a token of the defeat of his adversary. Some of his clergy, however, tried to dissuade him from engaging in the contest; but he told them of his dream, saying also, "Greater is He that reigneth in us than the spirit which possesseth him." The impostor was very soon compelled to confess all his fraud and falsehood, and soon after at Mayence was degraded from all ecclesiastical functions, and thence taken and confined within the Monastery of Fulda, whence in course of time he contrived to make his escape, and wandering about in hunger and great wretchedness, fell into the hands of some swineherds, who put him to death: and so ended his wretched error.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the council which condemned Clement and Aldebert, it was determined that the metropolitans should in future seek

Over these councils S. Boniface presided as Legate of the Apostolic See, and their decrees confirmed those of the four general councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. To Carlomann he recommended the frequent holding of Synods as the surest means of repressing heresy and corruption of life, before they spread to any formidable extent.<sup>1</sup>

In May of the year 742, S. Boniface, with about twelve Bishops, and with Willibald for his chancellor, held a council, for which he had obtained the leave of Carlomann, and the sanction of Pope Zacharias. The canons passed at this council are instructive, as showing alike the condition of many of the clergy, and the kind of temper and practice which the new converts displayed after their professed renunciation of their former life and customs. For the former, priests and monks were prohibited from going to war, and from hunting and hawking. They were enjoined to wear the canonical dress, and severe penalties were enacted for immoralities committed by them. For a priest so convicted the sentence was scourging until the flesh was laid open, and imprisonment for two years with fasting on bread and water. A not unnatural inclination in us might be to exclaim against such exceeding severity of punishment over what would be inflicted now. But it must be remembered that all who join themselves to any given body, make themselves amenable, in case of transgression, to all the penalties, however severe, decreed by that body

the pall at the Hands of the Roman Pontiff.—*Palmer's History of the Church*, 143.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 7.

for particular offences : and that there could be, therefore, no injustice so to punish a priest who had voluntarily subjected himself to the enactments which his own body from time to time might pass. The charge of injustice cannot indeed be maintained, but a grave question arises, whether the Church be not deserting her own rightful province in enacting laws which it must need the secular arm to execute. For it were monstrous to suppose that the Church, whose office it is to war with no weapons of earthly warfare, should have within her holy homes the dungeons of secular prisons—that the criminal should undergo his doom within the walls which had been hallowed for the perpetual praise and service of God only. We can never shrink too sensitively from condemning in any one point the blessed saints who have lived and died for CHRIST and His Church ; but it is no derogation to their holiness to assert that in some instances they were acting on a principle of which they themselves would repudiate the final development. Had the lot of S. Boniface been cast in our later ages, we may well conclude that he would have renounced the principle on which he was unconsciously acting. The history of the past three hundred years has only too plainly taught what must be the result when the Church of CHRIST strengthens herself (whether against her offending children or her external adversaries) by the terrors of the secular power. It is impossible that she can inflict such punishments for herself, and the obtaining their execution from earthly rulers must end in a grievous injury to her holy and heavenly character. But too much cause is there to

fear that many an age must pass away before the Church in this land recovers from the wound which she has received by entrenching herself within the barriers of civil penalties. It were a miserable delusion to imagine that such aid can ever really increase her power or add to her influence, however much under certain circumstances it may seem to do so. To renounce altogether such alien help may be the parting with apparent power; to confine herself to spiritual punishments only is for the Church of CHRIST to know with what weapons she may carry on her warfare, and to be enabled to wage it more hopefully and successfully. Far be it from us then to condemn the holy Boniface and his faithful Bishops; they knew not and could not know what, from the principle involved in their own decrees, was in store for future ages. To avail themselves of secular aid appeared then only to be the furthering of purely beneficial ends. By another canon the same council forbad, under sentence of death, that any should burn an old woman for a witch; most triumphant refutation that the Christian Church, in any age or any country, allows or encourages superstition; yet sad in the retrospect, as denouncing a punishment which another arm than her own must execute. Glorious, indeed, had it been if, by the influence of the Church, the Frank empire in that age could have seen so righteous an enactment embodied in the code of its civil law; but the glory is lost when the Church decrees, as though coming from herself, a punishment, the execution of which would be a contradiction to her heavenly nature.

Many other canons are directed against the particular errors and superstitious practices likely to arise amongst a people with the character and customs of these German tribes. It was forbidden to burn the dead, or to offer dead men's meats, or to hold a drinking bout or feast called *Hornung*, or to meet in the churches for the purposes of drinking and wassail ; as also all venerating and worshipping of forest trees, doing sacrifice or placing lights at high or rocking stones, or before Christian Saints as gods, was interdicted, with all wearing of amulets, all divination and augury, and superstitious reverencing of particular places, and the holding of festivals to any heathen god. These injunctions sufficiently show the difficulties which the Church had to cope with in these countries, and the mode in which she met them ; and it becomes a matter of but little surprise when we find a frequent tendency to relapse in a people who had been thus corrupted by one of the most degrading forms of heathenism.<sup>1</sup>

But the care of S. Boniface was not confined to the people of Germany ; the welfare of his native country was ever near his heart. The King of Mercia at this time was Ethelbald, the grand-nephew of Penda, to whom Boniface addressed a letter, from which the following are extracts. It proves (as William of Malmesbury observed) that those vices were already gaining ground from which the great Alcuin in a later day augured so ill for Saxon England :—

“ To Ethelbald, my dearest lord, and to be preferred to all other Kings of the Angles, in the love of CHRIST,

<sup>1</sup> See *Lives of the English Saints* : Family of S. Richard, p. 68.

Boniface, the Archbishop, Legate to Germany from the Church of Rome, wisheth perpetual health in CHRIST.—We confess before GOD, that when we hear of your prosperity, your faith, and good works, we rejoice ; and if at any time we hear of any adversity that may have befallen you, we are afflicted. We have heard of your attention to almsgiving, and that you prohibit theft and rapine, are a lover of peace, a defender of the widow and the poor ; and for this we give GOD thanks. Your contempt for lawful matrimony, were it for chastity's sake, would be laudable ; but since you wallow in luxury and adultery, it is disgraceful and damnable ; it dims the brightness of your glory before GOD and man, and transforms you into an idolater, because you have polluted the temple of GOD. Wherefore, my beloved son, repent, and remember how dishonourable it is that you, who, by the grant of GOD, are Sovereign over many nations, should yourself be the slave of lust to His disservice. Moreover, we have heard that almost all the nobles of the Mercian kingdom desert their lawful wives, and dwell in guilty intercourse with adulteresses. Let the custom of a foreign country teach you how far distant this is from rectitude ; for in old Saxony, where there is no knowledge of CHRIST, if a virgin in her father's house, or a married woman, should be guilty of adultery, they burn her, and hang up her seducer over the grave where she is buried. . . . If, then, the gentiles, who know not GOD, have so zealous a regard for chastity, how much more ought you to possess, my beloved son, who are both a Christian and a King ? Spare, therefore, your own soul—spare a multitude of people

perishing by your example, for whose souls you must give account. Give heed to this, too,—if the nation of the Angles (and we are reproached in France and Italy and by the very pagans for it), despising lawful matrimony, give free indulgence to adultery, a race must necessarily arise despising God, which will destroy the country by their abandoned manners, as was the case with the Burgundians, Provençals, and Spaniards, whom the Saracens harassed for many years on account of their past transgressions. Moreover, it has been told to us that you take away from the churches and monasteries many of their privileges, and by your example excite your nobility to do the like. But recollect, I entreat you, what terrible vengeance God hath inflicted upon former kings who were guilty of the crime which we lay to your charge; for Ceolred, your predecessor, the seducer of nuns, the infringer of ecclesiastical privileges, was seized, while splendidly regaling with his nobles, by a malignant spirit, who snatched away his soul without confession and without communion, while in converse with the devil and despising the law of God. He drove Osred also, King of the Deiri and Bernicians, who was guilty of the same crimes, to such excess, that he lost his kingdom and perished in early manhood by an ignominious death. . . . Wherefore, my beloved son, we entreat with paternal and fervent prayers that you would not despise the counsel of your Fathers, who, for the love of God, anxiously appeal to your highness. For nothing is more salutary to a good king than the willing correction of such crimes when they are pointed out to him; since Solomon says, ‘Whoso loveth in-

struction, loveth wisdom.' Wherefore, my dearest son, showing you good counsel, we call you to witness, and entreat you, by the living God, and His Son JESUS CHRIST, and by the HOLY SPIRIT, that you would recollect how fleeting is the present life, how short and momentary the delight of the filthy flesh, and how ignominious of a person of transitory existence to leave a bad example to posterity. Begin, therefore, to regulate your life by better habits, and correct the past errors of your youth, that you may have praise before men here, and be blest with eternal glory hereafter. We wish your highness health and proficiency in virtue." <sup>1</sup>

Another letter,<sup>2</sup> addressed to Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the same year, 745, gives an account of his work in Germany, and all that had been effected for the wellbeing and discipline of the Church in synods and in councils, and in decrees and canons made by them. In it S. Boniface also speaks of the great and almost insurmountable labours which he had to encounter, but declares also his confidence and the ground of his hope :—

"Let me speak with boldness," he writes, "because we preach peace on earth to men of good will, for that man cries out with boldness whom neither fear nor shame hinders from preaching the Word of Life. Let us strive by the help of God that we be not amongst those false shepherds whom the Prophet accuses, saying, 'Thus saith the LORD GOD: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who have fed themselves. Are not the

<sup>1</sup> *Patres Ecclesiae Anglicanae. Opera S. Bonifacii. Epist. lxi.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. Epist. lxi.*



flocks fed by the shepherds? but ye have not fed My flock,' &c. . . . Wherefore, most dear brother, because all these things are so, and because truth, although it may be assailed, can never be conquered, let our weary souls fly to Him who saith, 'Trust in the LORD with all thy heart, and rest not on thine own prudence in all thy ways. Think upon Him, and He shall direct thy steps.' And again, 'The name of the LORD is a most strong tower.' To Him the righteous flies and is safe. Let us continue steadfast in righteousness, and prepare our minds for temptation, that we may have the support of God, and say unto Him, 'LORD, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another.' Let us put our trust in Him Who hath laid the burden on us. That which we cannot bear of ourselves, let us bear through Him, the ALMIGHTY, Who says, 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' Let us stand in the battle in the day of the LORD, for days of anguish and tribulation have come upon us. Let us die, if God will, for the holy laws of our fathers, that we may attain with them the eternal inheritance. Let us not be dumb dogs and silent watchmen, hirelings who flee from the wolf, but watchful shepherds, guarding the flock of CHRIST, making known to small and great, rich and poor, the whole counsel of God, in season and out of season, as the holy Gregory has written in his pastoral book."

In the year 746 were ended the holy labours of S. Willibrord. For fifty years he had sought to establish the faith of CHRIST amongst a savage and heathen people, and for forty he had discharged the Archiepis-

copal office, and now at length, with his body worn out by age and toil, he had fallen asleep in the monastery which he had founded at Epternacum. One more then was now gone of those with whom Boniface had been joined in the work of conversion, signifying that his own time of departure was drawing nigh.

Soon after hearing of the death of Willibrord, he embarked on the Rhine, and went to Utrecht, where he found all sorrowing at the loss of their spiritual teacher. Boniface, although Primate of Germany, had as yet no fixed see, and he was induced to occupy that of S. Willibrord, not only from his own inclination, but at the earnest desire of Carlomann, as appears from the following letter to Pope Stephen, who succeeded Zacharias in 752:—

“In the time of Sergius, Pontiff of the Apostolic See, there came to the threshold of the holy Apostle a certain priest, of wonderful holiness and abstinence, of the nation of the Saxons, named Willibrord, and otherwise called Clement, whom the forementioned Pope ordained and sent to preach the Gospel to the pagan nation of the Frisians on the shores of the Western Ocean. Now he, labouring for fifty years, converted most part of that nation to the faith of CHRIST, destroyed their shrines and temples, and built churches, and founding an Episcopal See and a Church in honour of the Blessed SAVIOUR in the place called Utrecht, remained there preaching to an advanced age, and ordained for himself a suffragan Bishop to share the labours of his office, and, having finished his long course, departed in peace to the LORD. But Carlomann, the Prince of the Franks, commended that see

to my care, for the purpose of appointing and consecrating a Bishop, which also I did."

This Bishop was his disciple Eoban, whom he appointed his suffragan for the See of Utrecht, when he himself became Archbishop of Mayence. This appointment occurred very shortly afterwards, the last-mentioned see having become vacant in a manner which strongly illustrates the anomalous condition of these countries in matters of faith and practice.

The catalogue of the early Bishops of Mayence, which is not very trustworthy, has also been very imperfectly preserved. But during the reign of Carlomann and Pepin, the see was filled by a prelate named Gerold, who had succeeded another called Leowald, or Laboald; and when, in 743, Carlomann undertook an expedition against the Saxons who were at that time disturbing Thuringia, Gerold and his followers accompanied him: and the Bishop fell in a battle which took place during the campaign. This prelate left behind him a son named Gewelib,<sup>1</sup> who, by whatever means, succeeded to his father's office and bishopric; he, however, is reported as being a man of better life than Gerold, except with regard to hawks and hounds. But, in addition to this, he seems to have bent his whole mind on the desire of revenge, for he sought most diligently in every quarter to learn the name of the man who had slain his father. Two years afterwards Carlomann again led his forces against the same Saxons, and pitched his camp on the banks of the river Weser; there the Bishop ordered inquiries to be made

<sup>1</sup> This name is given in several other ways, as Gawielib, Geruilio, &c.

relative to the slayer of his father, and presently it was announced to him that the man was present in the ranks of the enemy. "Ask him," he replied, "to speak with me in the middle of the ford." The man came unhesitatingly at the summons, and Gewelib, advancing to meet him, cried out, "Receive the weapon with which I avenge my father," and plunged his sword into his body. The man fell dead into the water, and both armies at once engaged in a fierce struggle; but at length the Saxons gave way, and Carlomann with great spoil returned into his own country, and Gewelib to his bishopric, the King and the nobles, it would seem, having no idea of the sinfulness of the act, but only saying that he had rightly paid back the death of his father.

In the following year Boniface came to Mayence, and being made acquainted with the preceding history, he prepared at once to summon a Council of Bishops and clergy, for the purpose of deposing a man so utterly unfitted to preside over the Churches of CHRIST. At the same time he summoned Gewelib before himself, and spoke in solemn earnestness of the fearful sin of which he had been guilty, and of the impossibility of allowing a man who had shown so miserable an ignorance or forgetfulness of Christian practice to continue in possession of his see. Gewelib, on being thus addressed, probably felt pricked in his conscience, and perceived the truth of the holy Bishop's words; nor was he so entirely hardened as to conceal the effect which they had had upon him. He at once confessed his unworthiness, and without the intervention of a council resigned his see, and retired

to a benefice at Spanesheim, where for his remaining years he led a more creditable life, especially practising hospitality.

Thus was the bishopric of Mayence left vacant. Previously to this time, Boniface had purposed to establish his metropolitan see at Cologne, but now, from the universal desire of the people, he finally determined on the former, and at the same time left S. Gregory as his Vicar-General at Utrecht. But not long after this, owing to his own necessarily frequent and long-continued absence from the diocese of Utrecht, with Gregory he united Eoban, who, with himself, offered up his life for the sake of CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>

Carlomann, with his brother Pepin, had now possessed the supreme authority in France for nearly seven years, when, following an example not rare in those ages, he resolved to give up wealth, luxury, and power, for a life of constant prayer and self-denial in a monastery. S. Boniface had held a council in 743, at Leptines, or Lessines, in the diocese of Cambrai, at which Carlomann was present; and subsequently they conversed much together. His words sunk deep into the heart of Carlomann, who began to contemplate retiring to the discipline and seclusion of monastic life. At length, in the year 747, commending his son Drogo to the care of Pepin, he prepared for the journey to Rome, where he had proposed to put on the monastic habit. He arrived there with a princely retinue, which, after he had with them visited all the Churches and Oratories, he dismissed; and having received the habit at the hand of the Pontiff Zacharias,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 8.

he retired and built the Abbey of S. Sylvester, on Mount Soracte. But his name and former greatness attracting very many, especially of the Frank lords, he withdrew, by the Pope's advice, to Monte Cassino, where he lived for several years in great humility, and in constant prayer and self-denial, discharging cheerfully the meanest offices. Such a resignation of power we have already witnessed in S. Richard, the father of the holy Willibald. Ceolwulph, to whom Bede dedicated his history, was the eighth king of Northumbria, who had exchanged the crown for the tonsure; and similar examples were frequently recurring. Even at the time of Carlomann's arrival at Rome, among those who lived there according to the monastic rule was that King Ina,<sup>1</sup> before whom Winfred was brought, at the council from whence he went as legate to Archbishop Berctwald. In the year 741, the successful warrior and mighty prince, the munificent benefactor of the house of Glastonbury, had, at the inducement of his wife Ethelburga, laid down all his pomp and power, and retired to spend in privacy and self-denial the remainder of his days near the threshold of S. Peter. And with even stricter and more unwavering devotion lived Carlomann at Monte Cassino, and at length, being sent into France on business of his order, he died at Vienne, in the same year that the long toil of S. Boniface reached its glorious and blessed end.

For five years after the resignation of Carlomann, the nominal dynasty of the Merovingian race was suffered to continue, when the useless pageant was

<sup>1</sup> Chronicle of William of Malmesbury, i. 2.

abolished by Pepin. The degenerate princes of the Merovingian line came to an end in the person of the unhappy Childeric, who was deposed from his titular sovereignty in 752, and made to put on the monastic habit at Sithiu, or S. Bertin's, where he died three years afterwards. It would be vain to assert what were the precise motives which actuated Pepin in thus cutting short what had now become a mockery. We can scarcely suppose that they were wholly pure and unselfish. He himself afterwards expressed his sorrow and penitence for whatever sin he may in that act have committed through ambition. It is certain that both he and the nobles were bound by an oath of fidelity to the Merovingian; but then the French monarchy (as many others, and among them the early dynasties of England) was not hereditary, except with certain conditions and limitations; and it was essential to the peace of the kingdom that the question should be settled, while the rights of Childeric would only be used as a gathering cry for the seditious. The advice of S. Boniface was requested, but he shrunk from giving any decision of his own in so important a matter, from the same reluctance to interpose his own authority which is shown in his various writings. The question was at length submitted to Pope Zacharias, who gave for answer that it would be better if the name of king were conferred on the man who already possessed the power. This sanction confirmed the unanimous choice of the French nobles, and satisfied the desires of the whole nation. And so passed away the line of Clovis, while the Carlovingian king took up the relinquished scepter.

tre. A day was set apart for the anointing of Pepin to his kingly office ; and Boniface was chosen to administer the holy unction. In the city of Soissons,<sup>1</sup> in the presence of all the estates of the French kingdom, Pepin was solemnly anointed king by the hands of the holy primate of Germany, and received the oath of fealty from his subjects who bound themselves to choose no king except from amongst the number of his descendants. The hopes of Pepin were now accomplished, and it was time to make a return for benefits received. By the decision of the Pontiff, Pepin had been established in the Frank monarchy ; and the Senate and people of Rome had by their decrees invested Charles Martel and his descendants, with the title of patricians of Rome,<sup>2</sup> a title which conduced very greatly to the strengthening and aggrandisement of their sway. In gratitude for these benefits, the Pontiffs of Rome, in the person of Stephen the Third, were raised to the dignity and power of temporal princes, receiving from Pepin the exarchate of Ravenna, which the Greek emperors had abdicated, and of which the Lombard king was unable to retain the possession.<sup>3</sup> When the authority of Pepin was well established, Boniface resumed the holding of Synods, over which he presided as Apostolic Legate in France, as well as Germany. He had intreated Pope Zacharias, in 746, to allow him to resign his legatine authority in France, and that the burden of it might be transferred to some of the French Bishops. This request was refused ; but in-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon's Roman Empire, xlix.

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, chap. xlix.



stead of it he was permitted to appoint and consecrate his own successor in the see of Mayence: and now, accordingly, as his years were multiplied, and his bodily strength abated, and, moreover, as with the cares of the metropolitan see he had not leisure to attend the various synods, he anointed Lullus, an Englishman, formerly a monk of Malmesbury, to the Bishopric of Mayence, which he himself resigned before that last journey into Frisia, which preceded his martyrdom. Zacharias died after a pontificate of twelve years, immediately before the election of Pepin to the French monarchy. His successor Stephen confirmed the sanction given by his predecessor to the choice of the French nobles, and was in turn the object of Pepin's gratitude; but just with his accession to earthly dignity arose a storm which threatened to spread havoc over Italy. The flourishing state of his own kingdom, and the defenceless condition of Rome and Italy, held out a strong temptation to the Lombard king to seize upon it as his prey, under the pretext of opposing the Iconoclastic errors of the Greek emperor. Luitprand advanced, and obtained possession of Ravenna; and his successor Aistolf, or Astulfus, summoned Rome to acknowledge him as her lawful sovereign. Expostulation and entreaties were of no avail. The Lombard threatened to enforce his demands at the gates of Rome; the Pontiff sought only for means to avert the impending storm until he should have secured an ally powerful enough to maintain his cause successfully. The condition of Rome seemed a perilous one. The danger was near at hand, the succour far off, and

the Alpine barriers were interposed between them. Placed thus in a strait, Pope Stephen came to the resolution of going in person first to his adversary, and then to his ally. Having ordered Litanies to be sung in all the Churches, and cheered the fainting hearts of his people, he departed from Rome, and betook himself first to Ticinum, where the court of the Lombard king then was, and there tried the effect of personal exhortation, but in vain. Thence, with two priests only and two deacons for his companions, he proceeded on his way to the court of Pepin, and, having arrived, he sent a message to invite the king to come and see him. When he came, the pope sat with his companions clothed in sackcloth; and he said to him, "The honour of S. Peter is thrown down, and the glory of his house diminished;" and he drew forth a sword and put it into the king's hand, in token that he gave him authority to defend the rights of the holy see to the utmost of his power. It was during this sojourn at the French court that Stephen renewed the solemnity of Pepin's coronation, and with his own hands, in the monastery of S. Denys,<sup>1</sup> placed the diadem on his head, crowning at the same time, his wife Bertrada. The aid which he had come to seek was not demanded in vain. Not now, with one or two companions in fear and trembling, but with the mighty army which was led by the Frank king in person, the Pontiff returned into Italy. After a short resistance, the Lombard king was compelled to waive his claims, and respect the possessions of the holy see. But Pepin re-crossed the Alps; and

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon's Roman Empire, chap. xlix.

putting away the thought of the promises which he had made, Astulfus again beleaguered the walls of Rome. Once more Pope Stephen besought the aid of Pepin, and once more the Frank monarch led his hosts across the Alps, and dealt a more terrible retribution on the faithless enemy. The glory of the Lombard kingdom was now gone; for twenty years more it lingered on in a hopeless decay; and the successor of Astulfus, the last king of that once mighty realm, ended his days in obscurity within the dominions of the conqueror who now wore the iron crown of his forefathers.

During the sojourn of Pope Stephen in France, S. Boniface also happened to journey to the court of Pepin; and the Pontiff and his legate met. The latter still owed and paid the same obedience to the holy see, and felt the same devotion towards it; but, nevertheless, it appeared to him a sacred duty to declare his whole mind to Stephen, in a matter wherein he held him to have transgressed the boundaries of his authority.<sup>1</sup>

Stephen had consecrated Grodegang (or Rutgang<sup>2</sup>) to the Bishopric of Metz, in Lorraine, probably on the petition of Pepin, seven months after his own accession to the Pontificate; and Boniface now told him that it was not lawful for him to leave his own see, and, without the consent of the Bishop in whose diocese any given place was situated, to appoint a Bishop for that place; that his predecessors had not so acted, and that there was no ecclesiastical rule to

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Sanctorum* (Bolland.): Jun. i. 175, 4 and 9.

<sup>2</sup> According to Anastasius, Rutgang had been sent by Pepin to Pope Stephen, to invite him into France.

authorise it. His reason for urging this was that Metz was already comprised within the Archbishopric of Treves. This dispute was finally settled by the mediation of king Pepin, but in what precise way we are not told ; and on their parting, Boniface received the Pontiff's benediction, and returned into his own diocese.

He was now far advanced in years, and he must have thought that the end could not be far distant. How great, almost beyond all hope, had been the work which God had enabled him to accomplish. All the tribes and nations between the Weser and the Rhine, from Friesland to the modern duchy of Baden, he with his fellow-labourers had either rescued from utter Paganism, or recalled to the purity of the faith, from a miserably corrupted Christianity. And with this was to be summed up all that he had effected in Bavaria and Austria. Yet was he not one who rested on the past, except in thankfulness for what God had wrought through him, while yet, even close at hand, lay other regions almost wholly heathen. In the countries eastward of the Weser, we are told<sup>1</sup> that there was but one priest engaged in his solitary labours for the salvation of souls. His name, too, was Winfred : his father, Wart, is described as a kinsman of S. Boniface, and as having married a woman of Thuringia. But the holy Bishop had now planted in many a spot his little bands of holy men and faithful women, who should be the means of conveying the heavenly blessings to many a tribe which still lay sunk in utter darkness.

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Sanctorum*, (Bolland.) Junii i. 475. 4 and 9.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE, AND WORKING OF THE CHURCH.

“*Vis unita fortior.*”

THE instances which we have already met with of monasteries founded by S. Boniface, and the fact that the same course was adopted by Willibald, might naturally lead us to conclude that there was some principle which guided them to the carrying out of this system; otherwise, why should monasteries have been fixed upon as almost the only instruments for bringing the Church to bear upon the people? Distasteful as the mode may be in the opinion of many, it would be useless to attempt to account for the rapid growth and multiplication of such communities, wherever a new pathway was made for the spread of the Christian faith, by asserting it to be altogether the result of an excitable and romantic age. The supposition will not hold good, because the accusation (if it be meant for one) would tell against the very earliest ages of the Church. But if it be not intended in the way of blame, it must at once be confessed (and surely such a charge can be no fit subject for glorying) that

in those earlier times there was, if we so choose to term it, a spirit of romance and adventure which spurred men on to the endurance of hardship, toil, and poverty, if so be their labours might avail in the cause of the Catholic faith. They beheld men and things in a truer aspect and more vivid light; they looked upon them as either captives and bondmen of Satan, or as the temples of the HOLY GHOST; and it was to them an actual invasion of and victory over the powers of darkness, to redeem living souls from their deadly bondage, and confer on them the liberty of the sons of God. Whether, therefore, it were England that required conversion, or France, or Germany, there was no want of fearless and heroic men to adventure themselves in strange lands, and, uniting themselves together, to advance and take by storm the kingdoms of this world, and make them the kingdoms of God and His CHRIST. But, further than this, the imputation of enthusiasm will not serve without involving a condemnation of all zeal and self-devotion in the cause of truth. And happily, while we have to tell only of these earlier ages, we are spared all necessity of meeting any insinuation that the monasteries furnished allurements for worldly and selfish men, who, withdrawing from the duties incumbent upon them in active life, gave themselves up within the walls of their abbeys to a sluggish and dreamy existence. The times were yet far distant when law and justice were alike set at defiance to indulge a ravening appetite for plunder and demolition, with the plea that the monastic life had become more idle and luxurious than the most pampered indolence of the wealthiest of the world's

voluptuaries. It would not indeed be necessary, even in the case of those later houses, to enter on any regular defence of them against such baseless accusations, when, as has been well observed,<sup>1</sup> even the infidel Hume holds it to be the safer course to confine all charges against them to general imputations of "idleness," "ignorance," "superstition," and the like, "apart from grosser and more glaring crimes." Fallen indeed they were from what to us would be the incredible severity of the primitive rule of their orders; and by a comparison with their austere and unbending requirements, they might be said to have degenerated into a careless luxury. The Carmelite had indeed begun to wear shoes, and the Dominican to eat flesh; but we are prone to forget that in this, their relaxed and sunken condition, they still were enjoined the frequent fasts and vigils, the celibate life, the silence, and the daily hours of prayer, which to our minds would present the picture of almost unattainable strictness. But we are concerned now only with the earlier and less indulgent times, during which no such accusations could be maintained, even had they ever been urged.

On the outset, then, this fact urges itself prominently upon our attention—that, especially for the purpose of bringing new countries within the pale of the Church, the machinery most depended on for accomplishing the work was the monastic system. Doubtless in some parts it would be more imperatively required than in others. The conversion of the rude and fierce barbarian must be undertaken in a different

<sup>1</sup> Lives of the English Saints: S. Augustine, p. 140.

way from that of the keen and polished scholar or philosopher of highly civilized states. Yet even in these latter countries this same system was no less adopted and valued, and the reasons on which this estimation was founded cannot be ignored or contemptuously set aside. Chiefly, then, religious houses seemed to the men of those olden times as the city set on a hill, the light of which cannot be hid—the embodiment of the truth, enunciated by our LORD Himself, that His Church was to be for a witness as much as for a herald and a teacher—the holy places set apart for perfect devotion to the first and great commandment, the love of GOD, to which the second is subservient. Yet the tree, planted in this rich and fruitful soil, must needs grow up and spread abroad its branches; the stream flowing from that purest source must convey blessings to those who are without; for, first of all, the men of those ages knew well how to value the effectual intercession in behalf of the whole Church daily made by men whose whole lives were set apart for constant poverty and self-denial; and next, the monasteries were of incalculable benefit in arresting the tide of many a gross or subtle heresy. Gregory Nazianzen terms them the chief opposers of the Eunomian error.<sup>1</sup> The decay of Arianism is chiefly attributable to the alliance of Monachism with S. Athanasius. Hence the persecutions of the heretics were chiefly directed against the monks, for, in the words of Gregory Nazianzen, “However quiet and moderate they may be in other respects, they never purchase their peace at the

<sup>1</sup> Fleury's Ecclesiastical History, Oxford Translation, xxvi. 9, p. 135.



price of their fidelity to God. On this point they are ready to wage war to the death.”<sup>1</sup>

But more especially in the Western Church they became the great agents in carrying on the missionary undertakings for the conversion of the heathen. In each place where they settled themselves a nucleus was formed, from which the various subordinate missions might radiate. So was it with the mission of S. Ninian in Galloway; the Bishop and his clergy lived together under strict monastic discipline, and his Abbey of Whithern furnished a constant supply of teachers for that Northern Church.<sup>2</sup> Such also was the system introduced into the British Church by S. German, Bishop of Auxerre, during the visit which he made to England chiefly for the extirpation of the Pelagian heresy. The inhabitants of these monasteries were not indeed bound by vows which, in the Western Church, commenced with the order founded by S. Benedict.<sup>3</sup> So, too, had it been with S. Augustine. He, with his devoted band of brothers, had lived, when at Rome, under the monastic discipline; and their departure from it, after leaving Rome, was found to be far from beneficial; they all, therefore, speedily returned to their former rule, and hence arose at Canterbury the Monastery of S. Augustine.

These communities were all subjected to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the diocese in which they were severally placed. The fourth canon of the Council of Chalcedon enjoins the entire subjection of the monks

<sup>1</sup> Fleury's Ecclesiastical History, Oxf. Trans., xxvi. 9. p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Lives of the English Saints : S. Ninian, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. : S. German, p. 64.

in each city to their Bishop, and it is observable that the irregular monks, against whom this was directed, were everywhere the fomenters of schism. This strict subordination was only got rid of by means of exemptions obtained from the Holy See: thus we shall find S. Boniface, himself the Bishop of the diocese, praying the Pontiff to grant that his own Abbey of Fulda might be freed from all jurisdiction, except that of the Pope alone.

But if so great were the blessings spread by the monastic system under S. Augustine over Saxon England, of almost greater benefit was it in a country like Germany. For not only was there the same barbarism, the same corrupting and degrading superstition, the same pertinacious attachment to heathen rites and usages, the same or even more fierceness against all who came into collision with them; but the land, which they inhabited, presented far more of physical difficulty to any who might desire to traverse it for the sake of spreading the faith of CHRIST. The vast untrodden solitudes of the forests, the craggy mountains and secret ravines, the whole region unreclaimed from pristine desolation,—all required a greater combination of forces to overcome them than ever could be within the compass of isolated individuals. To the want of this establishment of ecclesiastical bodies throughout the country, might chiefly be attributed the very partial and temporary effects produced by the missions anterior to those of S. Willibrord and S. Boniface. To them it became at once evident that it was not enough to bring the heathen into the Church of CHRIST, and leave here and there a priest

to carry on the good work begun; a much better organized and more sustained opposition must be furnished to counteract the constant tendency to relapse displayed by these barbarous nations. And accordingly they both lived with their clergy after the monastic rule, and every where to the utmost of their powers they raised up these little communities whose united labours were to raise the superstructure upon the foundation which they themselves had laid. Not only did these bodies supply priests and teachers for the surrounding districts, but they were schools for the young who were instructed within their walls. The same holy end was especially answered by the various nunneries, which S. Boniface continually founded throughout his archiepiscopal province. Thus a vast ecclesiastical force ramified throughout the country, many of the smaller houses being subject to one superior (as for example seven monasteries in Thuringia were placed under the Abbot S. Winibald), and these again all subject to<sup>1</sup> and centring in the Archbishop, whose directions would by them be simultaneously carried out through the whole land. For it was manifest to Boniface that "in order to impress men's minds, not things but persons are required." We know indeed that truth must, from its own nature, prevail in the end; but it is at the same time certain that the

<sup>1</sup> The monasteries were not emancipated from episcopal jurisdiction until the tenth century.—*Lives of the English Saints. S. German*, p. 64. The churches subjected to S. Winibald, are called monasteries in the Chronicle of Andesches and Bruschiuſ, but without authority in the opinion of Serrarius.—*A. Butler, in S. Winibald. December 18.*

mere enunciation of principles is of little or no avail. It is futile to put before men the truths of the Gospel, and to think that their own weight will suffice to impress their hearts; these will never be influenced permanently except by the constant sight and knowledge of living personal holiness in their teachers.

All the religious houses, established by S. Boniface and his fellow labourers, appear to have been under the Benedictine rule. He himself had lived under the discipline of that order at Nutselle, and well knew its capabilities for working in such a country as Germany. It was indeed a strict rule, and carried out in all its strictness. In it we read that "every monk had his own cell to himself, a place of repose where he might sleep undisturbed or give himself freely to prayer and spiritual exercises without any kind of molestation from any of the rest of the brethren. They had a mat and a hard pillow to lie down upon, and a blanket or rug to keep them warm. They slept in their clothes girt with girdles; and thereby were always ready to attend their night devotions at the canonical hours. In the dormitory a perpetual silence was enjoined."<sup>1</sup> Some further account of the order is given elsewhere;<sup>2</sup> but the courses of their daily services may be here added. The first was the service of Matins, which at the various periods of the year were fixed at different hours, but always so that in summer they should be ended a short while before Lauds, which were offered up at day break. Then followed Tierce, and afterwards the Daily Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. At

<sup>1</sup> Lives of the English Saints. S. Augustine, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II., 3.

about half-past eleven followed Sext, and when they were ended, the monks partook of their mid-day meal. Nones were sung at half-past two, and Vespers three hours later. The Compline closed the daily round of prayer and praise—in winter at about seven o'clock, and in the summer about eight. When with these ever-recurring services we take the hours given to reading, to meditation, manual labour, teaching, visiting the sick and other duties, what a picture of untiring energy, of endurance beyond that of man, were it not upheld of God, does it bring before our minds? And yet even then it is only a bare and scanty outline, standing out cold and hard as a dull and monotonous routine; the spirit is gone which should animate the picture. We do not see the brethren themselves, and watch their placid countenances, or hear their gentle voices. We do not behold the hourly forbearance and self-denial exhibited in their words and deeds: we do not look upon the ready cheerfulness which made toil a delight, and humility a joy. We can but gaze afar off, while we dimly discern the beauty of the holiness which lived amongst them.

Such a blessed and devoted band had the Apostle of Germany gathered round himself, especially from his native land. The island of the Saints poured forth to him of her treasures, and he planted them as shining lights in the dreary wastes of his German provinces. The greatest and most saintly amongst them were of his kinsfolk. The children of S. Richard and S. Winna met at the last as fellow helpers of their illustrious relative; and scarcely one was there of that blessed family but was thought worthy in the end of being enrolled in

the catalogue of the Saints. This reunion of Saints in one family, has been noticed as far from uncommon in Saxon England; it does indeed bring before us one of the highest images which the mind can conceive, a holy family,—that especial development of Christian excellence which, with God's grace, might be looked for from a people with the naturally domestic character of the Saxons, and their strong regard for home affections and duties.

We have seen that when S. Willibald pursued his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Winibald, from weakness of health, remained in Rome, where he continued studying for seven years, and then returned to England, but did not stay there long. Having prevailed on his younger brother and some others to accompany him, he came back again to Rome, and resumed his studies within the seclusion of a monastery. On his third visit to Rome Boniface heard that his nephew also was there; and sending for Winibald, he obtained from him a promise that he would come and take part in his apostolic labours; while at the same time he requested the Pope to send him Willibald also. Shortly after, Winibald joined his uncle in Thuringia, and was by him ordained priest when he was nearly forty years of age, and entrusted with the care of seven churches in the same country. Not long afterwards, at the urgent request of Duke Odilo, he went and preached in Bavaria, and received from that prince many donations of money and lands. These he employed in restoring the ecclesiastical order of the country. Winibald, though of a weakly constitution, and devoted entirely to the contemplative life, was yet no feeble

and yielding reprovcr of irregularity and vice. Rich and poor, all were abashed at the boldness of his rebuke, and much was done towards restoring the discipline of the Church ; for everywhere he found a constant proneness in the people to resume their ancient superstitious practices ; the Sacraments were neglected ; many had contracted unlawful marriages, and many lived in profligacy. From Bavaria he returned to Mayence, but not considering that place advantageous for the monks who were with him, by Willibald's advice he withdrew to the valley of Heidenheim, near the sources of the Danube, in the year 751.

It was a wild and savage region : the old forests stood buried in all their ancient gloom ; and he and his monks, with their own hands, had to clear away a space sufficient for their church and monastery, and for a plot of garden ground to supply their daily wants. But neither here did he lead merely an inactive and contemplative life. His monastery was set to do the Church's work in the midst of a heathen people. Everywhere he found unlawful marriages, concubinage, and every kind of divination, and other superstitions ; and these he fearlessly set himself to combat and overthrow. He met with a fierce resistance : many a time the pagans threatened to set fire to the monastery, and lay in wait to kill him, or sought to cut him off by poison ; but holiness and truth prevailed after a while, and rage and hatred gave place to veneration and affection.

At Heidenheim also was his sister Walburga, who presided over a number of nuns, being herself subject to Winibald. When her father and brother departed

on their pilgrimage in 720, she, yet but a little child, was taken to Wimborn Minster, which had been built only two years before by Cuthberga, sister of King Ina, and wherein she, with her sister Quenburga, resided under the rule of the Abbess Tetta. Here she continued for nearly thirty years, and acquired the learning of those ages, especially the knowledge of Latin. But in the year 748 her long sojourn at Wimborn came suddenly to an end, for Boniface wrote requesting the Abbess Tetta to send Walburga with others to him in Germany. With thirty companions she set sail from England, and at length reached Mayence, where they were welcomed by Boniface and his suffragan Willibald. Having obtained permission, she went and placed herself and her companions under her brother Winibald at Heidenheim, and there they continued in holy devotion, spreading blessings around them in training the young who were committed to their care.

Among those who accompanied S. Walburga from Wimborn into Germany, were two nuns, named Tecla and Lioba, of whom the former was made Abbess of Kitzingen, which is three miles from Wurzburg. Lioba, who was of the same family with Walburga and S. Boniface, was placed over a community of nuns at Bischoffsheim, which rapidly became very numerous, and supplied many other houses which she founded in Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Of the other fellow-labourers of S. Boniface, the name of Lullus has been already mentioned. He, too,

<sup>1</sup> The names of Bertigita and Contruda also occur as abbesses in Thuringia and Bavaria. (A. Butler in S. Boniface.)



was a monk, first of Malmesbury, then of Jarrow, where he finished his studies under the Venerable Bede. In the year 732 he came to Germany, and joined his kinsman Boniface, by whom he was soon after ordained deacon, and priest in 751. About this same time, and possibly with Lullus, Burchard, afterwards Bishop of Wurzburg, came to join in the work of conversion. Over his see he presided only ten years, for his great toil had worn out his body, and he resigned his bishopric in 752 to Megingozus, a monk of Fridislar, and disciple of S. Wigbert, who was consecrated to succeed him. He retired to a secluded spot, named Hohenburg, to spend the remainder of his days in meditation and prayer; but his labours were already near their end, and in a few months afterwards he departed out of this life in peace, and was buried in the church of a monastery which he had built and dedicated in honour of S. Andrew.

Such were the chief of that blessed company, who, with S. Boniface, carried the light of the Gospel into the dreary wilds of Germany, under whose nurture the seeds of faith took root and sprang up and bare fruit a hundred-fold, in a soil which, to human eye, might have seemed fit to produce only thorns and briars, and who indeed wrought great things, for the hand of God was with them.

## CHAPTER VII.

LAST JOURNEY OF S. BONIFACE INTO FRISIA, AND HIS  
MARTYRDOM.

A.D. 755.

“The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall be refreshed in the multitude of peace.”

NEARLY forty years had passed away since first the great Apostle of Germany had left his home of Nutscelle to adventure himself for the Cross of CHRIST amongst a savage and heathen people. And now, after all his weary yet blessed labour, he was at length to pass through the Red Sea of martyrdom, probably in that same land from whence at the first he had returned to England, unsuccessful, yet neither disheartened nor desponding. He formed the resolution of visiting the northernmost of the provinces committed to his care—that portion which is comprised in modern Friesland, the ancient Frisia being of far greater extent. But he felt, moreover, that now the time of his departure was at hand, and therefore he gave his final charge to Lullus, solemnly committing to his care the several churches which he had founded, and bidding him see that the sacred edifices which he had begun were duly and seemingly finished for the honour of GOD; and with especial tenderness he con-

fided to him the brethren at Fulda, praying him to see that the church which was being built there should be completed and beautified, and obtaining from him a promise that, wheresoever he might depart from this world, he would bring his body to rest within its holy walls. Finally, he bade him get ready the things which they had need of for the journey, and in the chest containing his books to place a winding-sheet, which should enwrap his body when its mortal toil was ended. Lullus, while he promised to obey all these injunctions, yet could not refrain from tears; and, seeing his sorrow, Boniface turned their conversation to other subjects. A few days afterwards he, with his companions, set out on his travels, and having crossed the Zuyder Zee, landed in Frisia, where, as had been his wont, he went about continually, teaching and converting the people, throwing down idol-temples and images, and, with the help of Eoban and others, baptizing many thousands. For a while they appeared to receive his teaching gladly, but some were secretly preparing a fierce resistance. The same corrupting influence of heathenism which occasioned the constant relapse of the people of Thuringia, here showed itself in the tenacity with which they clung to their false religion, declaring that they would stand out to the death before they forsook the customs of their forefathers.

At length, in the course of his ministrations, Boniface appointed a day for confirming those of the converts who had been baptized; and, for the holy rite, he fixed upon the spot which was to be the scene of his martyrdom. The three divisions of modern Friesland are Ostergoa, Westergoa, and Sevewold. In the

first of these lay the town of Dockom, sometimes called Dockinga. His biographer, Willibald, states that he pitched his tents on the banks of the river Bordne. That little stream no longer retains the name, but two towns on its banks show traces of it in their designations—Bornwert and Bornwerthusen. This stream, before it reaches Dockom, is discharged into the river Pæssens, and the two so far surround a portion of its district, so as to give it the appearance of an island.

As some time still intervened before the time fixed for their appearing before the Bishop, every one of the recent converts returned to their homes. But meanwhile the heathen were maturing their unholy designs, and concerting the destruction of S. Boniface and his companions. Yet no sign of their barbarous purpose was seen before the day appointed for the confirmation. During the preceding night a strong light from heaven rested on the tent wherein the aged soldier of CHRIST offered prayers and praises to GOD; and when the day broke, they stood prepared to administer the holy offices of the Church. For a while all was still: when suddenly were heard the sounds of approaching multitudes. But they came in no peaceful guise—whether the recent converts had lapsed into their former heathenism, and with it displayed a double portion of ferocity and rage, or whether it were that the obstinate heathen had overpowered their resistance, and compelled them to remain absent from the field; but the brandished lances and unsheathed swords flashing in the morning light, and their furious gestures, revealed their deadly purpose. In haste, with such

weapons as they could find, some of the attendants from the little camp of the Christian missionaries rushed forward to interpose themselves as a defence between the heathen and their prey.

But the confused sounds, each moment growing louder, roused Boniface and his faithful followers, who gathered themselves together round the holy Bishop. With the relics of the saints, which he never failed to keep with him, he came forth at their head out of the tent, and commanded those who would have fought for him to lay by their swords, for that Holy Scripture taught us not only not to render evil for evil, but even to requite it with good. "For now," he said, "is the long wished for day, and the time is come to lay aside the burden of the flesh. Be strong, therefore, in the LORD, and receive with thankfulness the gift that cometh of Him: put your trust in Him and He shall deliver your souls." So, too, he spoke to the Priests, and Deacons, and other Clerics, who stood around:—"Be strong, and of good courage, not fearing them who may kill the body, but cannot touch the soul: rejoice in the LORD, and in Him put your trust, Who will give you the reward of eternal life. Be not overcome by the pleasures of this vain world; but pass with boldness the narrow strait of death, that ye may reign with CHRIST for ever." They replied that so they had been taught by the holy Willibrord, and that so they were prepared to lay down their lives for CHRIST, Who had redeemed them with His own blood. Thus strengthened and comforted, they waited for the end. The enemy came on with blind rage and fury, while the

holy martyr Boniface prepared, meekly and humbly, yet with joy, to receive the crown which God would bestow upon him. The murderers approached; he knelt down upon the ground, and placing a copy of the Holy Gospels on his head, commended his soul into the hands of God. A short while after, and the work of carnage was ended; the blessed Boniface and his holy and faithful companions slept in peace. The warfare was accomplished; there remained henceforth the eternal weight of glory.

The heathen had glutted their appetite for vengeance; they rushed now to the division of the spoil. Their hopes had pictured to them vast heaps of gold, silver, and other treasures piled up within the tents of the Christians; and they greedily seized on the cases of relics and the chests which were full of books. Thence they hastened to the ships which contained their store of food and a small quantity of wine. This they at once commenced drinking, having broken the jars which contained it, and feasted on the provisions of which they had obtained possession. Heated with the wine, and elated with their success, they began to consult about the division of the spoil, and to assign to each a share of gold and silver which they had not even seen. From angry disputes and complaints of injustice, inflamed with wine and fury, they speedily split asunder into two factions, and the swords which but a little while before had been dyed in the blood of saints, were now wielded by their murderers against each other. Fiercely raged the battle, until the greater number of the persecutors lay cold and stiff upon the earth. The survivors, with yet more furious

greediness, tore open the chests and caskets for the treasure which they thought was hidden within. A few books and scrolls of parchment, rich indeed with the Word of Life, but of no value in carnal eyes, and some relics of saints who long ago had been taken to their reward, were all the riches which they there beheld. Their disappointment vented itself in unrestrained and impotent fury. The volumes were hurled over the fields, or cast into the surrounding marshes, or thrust into the most secret and hidden places. A long while after all or most of them were found, and sent by the finders to the Churches wherein they were carefully preserved. But yet a further retribution was in store; for within three days, when the deaths of the holy martyrs became known through the country, the Christians gathered themselves together, and advanced against their murderers. Probably they were but recent converts, who had not learned to carry into practice the holy lesson that they resist not evil. Yet more of the barbarians were overthrown and put to flight; many once again returned to the profession of the Christian faith. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church; and that country which had resisted the labours of S. Boniface on his first coming, and had finally shed his blood by the hands of her sons, now at length brought forth fruits of penitence, and the waste wilderness became a watered garden. Fifteen years afterwards, a Priest of Northumberland, named Willehad, came into Friesland to labour for the Church; and fixing his residence for some time on the very spot where S. Boniface made his good confession, he was re-

ceived with joy by the converts who were living there.<sup>1</sup>

Local tradition still commemorates each place hallowed by the blood of saints and martyrs; and the spot which was the scene of their heavenly triumph still retains the name of Moorwaude, "the wood of slaughter."

S. Boniface and his companions rested from their labours on the fifth day of June, 756. For thirty-six years he had been Legate of the Holy See; and for thirty-one years and six months Apostolical Bishop.

When the tidings reached Utrecht that the holy lives of S. Boniface and his followers had been consummated by the glorious crown of martyrdom, the Clergy, with S. Gregory, the Vicar-General, at their head, came to the place where the bodies lay. Some of the brethren they buried on the spot whereon they had given up their lives for the Gospel; but the bodies of S. Boniface and of some others they raised up reverently, and bore to a vessel in which they were conveyed across the Zuyder Zee to Utrecht. And there for a few days rested the mortal body of S. Boniface. But Lullus, the Archbishop of Mayence, remembered the solemn promise which he had made to the holy martyr, that his bones should rest within his well-loved abbey of Fulda, and sent a man of holy life, named Hadda, and some other priests, with a charge to bring the body from Utrecht to his Archiepiscopal city. On their arrival, a great number of people assembled to meet them—having learnt for what purpose they had come, and sorrowing because

<sup>1</sup> Palmer's History of the Church, p. 146.



the remains of S. Boniface might not rest in the Cathedral Church of S. Willibrord. For a while, however, it seemed that their wishes would be accomplished, for the Prefect of the city (by the authority conferred on him by Pepin<sup>1</sup>) published an edict forbidding the removal of the body from Utrecht. But when they came to bear it to their own Church, it is said to have remained immoveable, and the bell of the Church gave no sound when pulled by the utmost efforts of those who desired to ring it. They acknowledged this as a sign that they should resist no longer; and Hadda and his brethren, raising up the body, arrived with it at Mayence on the thirtieth day after the martyrdom. On the same day, without any previous concert, great numbers of the people had assembled in the city to await the coming of the holy relics; and at the same time, likewise, arrived Lullus, the Archbishop, who had been absent at the palace of the Frank king. With mingled joy and sorrow, they hailed the procession as it drew near the city. They should no more hear the voice, or be strengthened by the oral teaching of their spiritual father, and it was a grief to think that they could no more experience his constant and loving watchfulness, or obey his holy instructions. Yet it was joy to believe that he, who was gone away from among them, still prayed and interceded for his people, and that while they had

<sup>1</sup> Pepin was at this time in Italy, whither he had gone for the purpose of delivering Rome from the blockade of Astulphus, king of the Lombards. It was customary, in the absence of the king, to leave such general power as that which is instanced in the narrative, in the hands of the Prefects of cities.

lost a ruler and a teacher, they had found a patron, who was enrolled in the noble army of martyrs. For a few days again the body rested; and when they came to wash it, the wounds bled afresh, and the linen cloths, which received the blood, together with the vestments in which he had suffered, were reverently placed by Lullus in the Church which was dedicated in honour of the holy Boniface. Here, too, the people longed to retain his relics amongst them; but Lullus had not forgotten the word which he had pledged. The saint likewise appeared in a vision to a Deacon named Otpercht, and said to him, "Go and tell Lullus that he bear my body to the place of its rest." But when he told it, many hesitated, and some did not believe it; so Lullus gathered together a great number of relics, and caused him to swear over them, that what he had stated was true; and he extended his arms over the altar and the relics, and prayed that God might so help him as he had spoken truly. And after this they made ready to carry the body across the Rhine. They wrapped it first in a fine linen cloth, and then bore it to the vessel; and such was the number of people and of boats gathered together to witness the solemnity, that the Rhine seemed almost covered with them. While they were being carried across, they chanted Psalms and hymns; and having landed on the other side, Lullus and the Clergy bore the body onwards in the direction of Fulda, and wheresoever they halted, whether at midday or during the night, they erected a cross in token of the victory won over death and the grave.

The approach of S. Lullus with his brethren and

the treasure which they bore, caused great joy in the Abbey of Fulda, and they prepared for their reception. But the brethren had little to set before them after their long journey, except milk, butter, and cheese; and Sturmi, the Abbot, gave command to one of the monks named Ritant, (to whom, with his brother Wolfmar, the fisheries of the monastery were entrusted,) to go and catch some fish. He hastened to the spot where they were generally most abundant; but as he was preparing to cast in his net, suddenly the fishes of the stream all arose to the surface of the water lying on their backs, and he had only to gather them into his boat: and at the same moment he heard the sound of the hymn which announced that the body of the saint was being carried over the bridge.

A little while more, and the psalm of thanksgiving was offered up, and the relics of the holy martyr were laid within their final resting-place. He had departed, but most of them who had laboured with him yet remained on earth; and the mind seeks to fill up the picture, and to look upon them as one by one they were gathered into the heavenly garner like the ripe corn in its season.

S. Winibald had been nearly ten years in his Abbey of Heidenheim, when his rapidly increasing infirmities, which had prematurely bowed him down, gave token that his days on earth were drawing to an end. He travelled to Fulda to visit the tomb of the blessed martyr, and returning very weak to his own monastery, he formed the design of going to finish his course at Monte Cassino; but Willibald

strongly dissuaded him from undertaking so wearisome a journey, which, in his decrepid state, was almost impracticable; and Winibald meekly and readily yielded up his own will. For a little while longer he lingered on in great bodily pain and weakness; and at length, perceiving that his time was come, he assembled his monks and friends, with whom was his sister Walburga and his brother Willibald: and exhorting them all to "love one another and keep the true Catholic Faith always," requesting at the same time their forgiveness for all wherein he had offended them, even as he forgave them for all wherein they might have erred towards him, he commended his spirit into the hands of God, on Saturday, the 18th of October, 761.

To Walburga, the death of Winibald, whom (as well from having been more constantly with him as from the very weakness of his constitution) she tenderly loved, was the cause of a constant and settled grief. Henceforth, she presided not only over her nuns, but, according to her brother's desire, over his community of monks also. This was an arrangement occasionally permitted in those ages; and the same had obtained at Wimborn. She survived him sixteen years, and died about the year 776, after having lived for twenty-five years at Heidenheim: and Willibald came and laid her body by the side of the brother whom she had loved so dearly. About sixty years afterwards, her relics were translated to Aichstadt.

In the same year, 776, on the 25th of August, the holy Gregory, who for twenty years, as Vicar-General, had administered the diocese of Utrecht, departed to his reward. His life was one of constant

prayer, study, labour, and charity. Two of his brothers had fallen into the hands of robbers, and been killed by them. The murderers were sent to him to be put to death, for by the custom of that country this office fell to the charge of the nearest relative. S. Gregory ordered that they should be washed, clothed, and fed; and dismissed them, saying, "Go in peace; never again commit such a deed, lest a worse thing happen to you; and beware of the other relations of those whom you have slain." In his habits he was simple, reserving no money for himself, and keeping nothing valuable whatsoever, except the treasures of the Church. A painful sickness, of three years, preceded his death. When he felt his end approaching, he had himself carried into the Church, and soon after breathed his last, with his eyes intently fixed upon the Altar, which told of the "purity of soul and holiness of holies of the Common Priest of us all."<sup>1</sup>

A little later than Walburga, S. Lioba, Abbess of Bischoffsheim, was taken to her rest, and buried (according to the wish expressed by S. Boniface to Lullus before his last journey into Friesland) near the shrine of the holy martyr at Fulda.

Very shortly after S. Walburga, ended the labours of S. Sturmi, a Bavarian by birth, the first abbot of Fulda. All men have their crosses, and that of Sturmi in his later years was to be misapprehended and thought ill of even by those who, like himself, were devoted to the service of God and His Church. Subsequently to the glorious martyrdom of S. Boniface, Sturmi was accused of treason in favouring the ene-

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius : Hist. Eccl. x. 4, 65.

mies of King Pepin, by whose orders he was driven into banishment, but shortly afterwards was recalled. False reports concerning the holy abbot were carried to S. Lullus, who in consequence took part against him. The cloud was a dark one, and cast a dreary shadow; but it passed away, and the sky was bright again. Lullus made amends for the evil imputations which he had unwittingly thrown upon him, and he lived in great respect and favour with Charlemagne. His death took place December 17, 779, and he was afterwards enrolled among the Saints.

There remain but two more of whom we have now to speak.

S. Willibald's presence at the council convened by S. Boniface in 742 is nearly the last act on record in the life of that holy Bishop, except the general statement of his manner of discharging his sacred duties. Himself the first-born of his father's children, he was the last to reach the close of his arduous yet blessed pilgrimage. The meek and gentle Winibald, the pure and humble Walburga, had departed to their rest many years, before he himself laid aside the burden of the flesh. He is supposed to have died about the year 796, and was buried in the crypt of his own Church of S. Mary at Aichstadt. Afterwards his remains were carried from their first resting-place, and, after one or two more translations, placed in that part of the Cathedral Church of Aichstadt which is named S. Willibald's Choir.

Last of all that holy band, S. Lullus ended in peace the life which he had always devoted to God. That he was a man of great learning, is evident from the

number of questions on the most difficult points both of doctrine and practice, which were addressed to him from Rome, France, and England. The teaching of the first historian of England had found a fitting recipient. For nearly thirty years he had presided over the see of Mayence, when, like the great S. Boniface, he too gave up his office to another, and retired to the Monastery of Harsfeld which he had built. There, on the 1st of November, 787, he peacefully rendered up his soul.

And so, from the bosom of the Church on earth, these sacred plants were translated to their heavenly soil,—through God's grace, none fallen, none coming short of the everlasting inheritance. Having shone as lights in the world, they were become jewels in the crown of Him, Who liveth for evermore.

## CHAPTER VIII.

NOTICE OF THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CHURCHES  
FOUNDED BY S. BONIFACE.

“Their bodies are buried in peace, and their name liveth evermore.”

IN the year of our LORD 735, the Venerable Bede was taken to his rest. Twenty years afterwards S. Boniface received the crown of martyrdom. Yet so immediately (observes the Bollandist historian) was his name held in honour among the Saints of God, that it is found inserted in the last and most genuine copies of the Martyrology of Bede, as though he had attained to his reward before him. It is celebrated likewise in numerous other martyrologies, as of Raban, sixth Abbot of Fulda, and the churches of Trêves and Utrecht, Mayence, Erfurt, &c.

When the intelligence of the martyrdom had been received in England, Cuthbert, then Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned a synod of bishops and abbots, which appointed the 5th day of June, the day on which his warfare was accomplished, to be everywhere kept in his honour; and, with the concurrence of the synod, he also addressed to Lullus, the successor of S. Boniface in his archiepiscopal office, the following letter:—



“Rejoicing in the wonderful and ineffable goodness of GOD, we give thanks that the English nation has been held deserving to send forth from herself, for a spiritual warfare and the salvation of many souls by the grace of GOD, so illustrious a soldier of CHRIST with many disciples well trained and instructed, so that he was enabled to guide the most savage tribes, who had wandered so long out of the way, from the pit of destruction to the glorious paths of the heavenly country, by exhortation and good example, himself the leader and standard-bearer, conquering all adverse things by the help of GOD. All this the fruits of his labours demonstrate more nobly than words, especially in those regions which no one had ever attempted to enter before for the sake of preaching the Gospel. Wherefore, after the incomparable band of the Apostles—mysterious in their election and their number—and the other disciples of CHRIST who then laboured for the Gospel, we esteem and venerate this one amongst the best and noblest teachers of the orthodox faith. Therefore, also, in our general synod, while considering fully other matters which in few words we make known to your holiness, we determined to set apart the day of his martyrdom for an annual celebration in honour of him, and of those who with him obtained the same crown, inasmuch as we especially desire, and without doubt believe ourselves, to have him, along with the holy Gregory and Augustine, as our patron in the presence of CHRIST our LORD, Whom in his life he ever loved, and Whom, by His Grace imparted, in his death he glorified.

“But we are always ready to help you in whatever

way we can ; and first of all, in the words of the Apostle, we make mention of you in all our prayers,—which thing (as we know that it was often desired by the holy Boniface while yet he was alive upon the earth) we hold necessary ever to keep in mind, that mutual intercession may always be offered up for us and ours, according to the apostolical command, ‘Pray for one another,’ &c. ; for where, according to the promise, the help of the LORD is, all the power of the enemy is put to flight : for He has said, ‘If two of you shall agree on the earth for anything whatsoever ye shall pray for, it shall be given you from My FATHER, which is in heaven.’ . . . . What else ought we then in the first place to do, but ever to pray for the intercession of the holy Apostles and Martyrs of CHRIST, and the venerable Bishops of the Churches of God, that, by the grace of CHRIST, we may persevere with continual watchfulness in the calling wherewith we have been called, and preserve the harmony and unity of the Church. . . . . So shall we be in favour with all good men, and acceptable and dear to Almighty God ; and so, with our blessed father your predecessor, may we hear those blessed words of CHRIST the Judge of all men, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things ; I will place thee over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy LORD.’ Amen.”<sup>1</sup>

In the same strain wrote another English Bishop, who had been with S. Boniface during his life in Germany :—

<sup>1</sup> Patres Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ. Opera Sancti Bonifacii, Epist. ciii.

“To my most loving and dear Lord in CHRIST, Bishop Lullus Milred, the servant of those who serve GOD :—Since I departed from your presence, and that of the most holy Bishop and blessed father Boniface, through many chances and dangers, (by your prayers) I reached the land of our nativity. There, before the year had reached its end, the sorrowful news was brought to me that our holy father had departed out of the prison house of the body to the joys of heaven,—if indeed that news may be called sad, when we have been held deserving to send before ourselves such a patron to the heavenly kingdom, by whose intercession, through the help of GOD, we trust that we may be strengthened in the faith. And although I have mourned with many bitter tears for the consolation which we have lost in this present life, yet he, who by the shedding of his blood has been consecrated a martyr to CHRIST,—the glory of all whom his native land hath produced,—by the consummation of his blessed labours soothes and softens our sorrowful hearts with a deeper joy. We mourn for our lot in this vale of tears, as we sojourn in this life which is full of trials. He has accomplished his pilgrimage, with great toil indeed, but, as CHRIST’s Martyr, has attained to a most glorious death : and, if the Divine goodness permit, stands a faithful intercessor for our errors with CHRIST, amongst the blessed citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.”<sup>1</sup>

What the exact number was of those, who with him gave their lives for CHRIST’s sake, is doubtful,—some

<sup>1</sup> *Patres Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ. Opera S. Bonifacii. Epist. cvi.*

asserting that there were fifty-two, others again that there were either less or more. But few names remain, the rest have been forgotten: the former, (differing, however, more or less in the various accounts) are those of Eoban or Coeban, the suffragan Bishop<sup>1</sup> of S. Boniface, Adalhere, Wintrung, and Walter, priests: Hamund, Scirbald, and Bosa, who belonged to the minor orders of the Church: Waccar, Gundecar, Ellehere, Hathewulf, monks; with Hildebrand, and probably about forty others of the laity.

Ten years before his martyrdom, S. Boniface laid the foundation of the monastery at Fulda, now in the territory of Hesse Cassel. He had previously sent Sturmi, his disciple and fellow labourer, to the Abbey of S. Benedict at Monte Cassino, to learn fully the discipline of his order, and, on his return, he appointed him to preside as Abbot over the new community.<sup>2</sup>

This monastery was the especial object of the holy Bishop's care and affection; therein he hoped that his own body might rest, when he should have ended his earthly labours; and all his love and watchfulness over it were abundantly rewarded. He lived to see the Abbey prove a blessing to the countries round about, and before the death of Abbot Sturmi, the house contained about four hundred brethren. In every way he sought to throw round this holy home all the safeguards in his power. From Pope Zacharias he obtained first the privilege that "the monastery of S.

<sup>1</sup> Alubert, an Englishman, was appointed to fill the place of the Martyr Eoban.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II. 10.

Saviour, which has been placed under the jurisdiction of our holy Church, shall not be subjected to the jurisdiction of any other Church; so that, unless he shall have been invited by the Abbot of the Monastery, no one shall in any wise presume to celebrate there even the solemnity of the Mass."<sup>1</sup>

Again through Fulrad, Abbot of S. Denys, and Chaplain to King Pepin, he sought to obtain that monarch's protection for the newly-founded Abbey. "Almost all the brethren," he says, in a letter to him, "are foreigners; some are priests appointed to minister for the Church and people in many places: some are monks; some are children sent there for instruction, and a few are old men who have a long time lived with me, and helped me, and shared my labours. For all these I am very anxious, that after my death they may not be scattered, but that they may have the benefit of your counsel and protection."<sup>2</sup>

In the apsis of this abbatial Church of Fulda, the body of S. Boniface at first rested: and near him lay those of S. Lioba and Sturm, the first abbot. But his successors, Baugolf and Ratgar, commenced and carried on the building of a new and more splendid Church, which was completed by Egil, the fourth

<sup>1</sup> Acta Sanctorum (Bolland.) Junii 1. 490. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Sturm, the first Abbot, died December 17, 779: he was followed by Baugolf, who in 802 was succeeded by Ratgar. Egil was appointed fourth Abbot in 818, and died after presiding over the Monastery five years: he was followed by the great Rabanus Maurus, who, while Abbot, made the house celebrated as a seat of learning throughout Europe: in 847 he was raised to the Metropolitan See of Mayence, two years after Hincmar had been consecrated Archbishop of Rheims.

abbot, and dedicated on All Saints' Day, 819, when also the relics of the saint were translated to a richer shrine, in the presence of the Archbishop Hecstulph with the clergy and a vast number of people. The body was raised from its humble tomb with songs of triumph and thanksgiving, and was borne, as the priests chanted aloud the *Te Deum*, to the apse of the new Church, and there placed in its shrine, which was afterwards adorned with paintings. When all was done, the holy Sacrifice was offered up.

Very numerous were the donations and bequests made and given to the monastery of Fulda, the especial care of S. Boniface in his lifetime, and now more dear as the resting place of his mortal body. Among them were those of S. Lullus and S. Willibald; and in all, many ages ago, so many as four hundred and sixty had been reckoned up: and we have the testimony of the great Rabanus Maurus that, before his shrine at Fulda, numerous miracles were vouchsafed, as the healing of bodily infirmities and deliverance from demoniacal possession.<sup>1</sup>

Years passed away, and the Abbey of Fulda, as well as many neighbouring churches, suffered severely from fire and the ravages of war, and much therefore of the relics of S. Boniface was lost. Some, however, were still preserved: and in 1605 a search was instituted,

<sup>1</sup> This is found in a poem written by him in praise of S. Boniface: the lines on this subject run as follows:—

*Signa movent populos : cernunt magnalia cœci,  
Surdorumque sonus auribus ipse tonat.  
Morborum fugiunt labes, furor impius atri  
Dæmonis absistit Martyris ex precibus."*

and a fine linen cloth was discovered in an ancient chest, bearing the inscription "Sudarium Sancti Bonifacii Martyris." There had also been preserved his sacerdotal ornaments, his ring, stole, maniple, girdle and pastoral staff, together with some books which belonged to him. One of these is remarkable as having been in great part his travelling library,<sup>1</sup> if we may so term it. It contained, among other works, bound up together, 1. a letter of Pope Leo to Theodore Bishop of Forli: 2. a Treatise of Cerealis against Maximin, on the Holy Trinity: 3. a Sermon of S. Ambrose, on the Holy Spirit: 4. the Rule of the Catholic Faith: 5. Records of the Countries and Cities where rested the bodies of the holy Apostles and Evangelists. There was also a copy of the Gospels, which was erroneously considered by some to have been that one which he placed upon his head before receiving his death blow: but the condition of the book precluded such a supposition. This copy had been transcribed by the hand of S. Boniface himself; for which cause the Abbot Huoggi earnestly besought and obtained its restoration from the Emperor Arnulph, about the year 890. A larger copy of the Gospels was indeed found, which had suffered from the stroke of a sword: but a more probable hypothesis to account for this is that

<sup>1</sup> A life of S. Livinus, an Irish Bishop and patron Saint of Ghent, was attributed to S. Boniface, as having been written by him at the request of some of that Saint's disciples. The notion is sufficiently disproved by the fact that these disciples had been dead some while before Boniface came into Frisia: apart from this, the book contains several anachronisms, which prove that it was drawn up in the twelfth or thirteenth century.

the barbarians, having dipped their hands in the blood of the Saint, rushed tumultuously to his tent and chests in an eager search for gold, and finding nothing but books and sacred utensils, vented their fury upon them.

The bodies of Eoban and Adalhere rested first at Utrecht, in the Church of S. Saviour; but they were afterwards carried to Fulda, and then placed by that of the holy martyr, whose fellow-labourers they had been, where they reposed for nearly four hundred years, until in 1184 they were finally translated to Erfurt.

But not at Fulda and Utrecht only was the name of S. Boniface especially loved and honoured. Some of his relics were translated in 1124 to Bruges, and placed in the Church of the Blessed Virgin, and were exposed to the veneration of the people at several periods, of which the most notable appears to have been that in the year 1679, at the especial request of the Duke of Norfolk, at that time an exile from England, in consequence of the severities which were then being exercised there.

Thus have we traced out the various translations of the relics of S. Boniface from one resting place to another, and seen the reverent estimation in which they were regarded. Surely we have lost, not gained, by our comparative disregard of the earthly remains of the people of God. We cannot be the better for drawing a veil over the departed, as soon as their bodies are committed to the earth; for the mortal tabernacles of the Saints are the temples of the HOLY GHOST: and that which has once been so hallowed, can never



lose its holiness or be fitly disregarded when the soul has been taken away to the blissful rest of Paradise. Very different to this cold unconcern was the careful reverence displayed by the Church of old to every relic and memorial of all who had died in the Lord. In the devout estimation of those earlier ages 'their bodies were buried in peace, and their name lived for evermore.' Every place where the more illustrious of the servants of CHRIST had ministered and laboured, was loved and revered accordingly: and in proportion as we endeavour to realise their temper, the mind will delight to glean up every incident, which is recorded of the various spots connected with their memory. We may therefore put together a few notices of some of the other churches which were consecrated or commenced during the lifetime of S. Boniface.

We have already recorded the destruction of the idol at Stuppenberg, near Eichsfeld: there, as was his wont in all other places, when the work of demolition was accomplished, Boniface built a small chapel or oratory on the summit of the hill, and left one of the priests, who attended him, for the purpose of instructing and converting the neighbouring people. At this little oratory, after his martyrdom, many were healed of their diseases, wounds, or infirmities.

It was indeed a notable spot. Near to it, more than 700 years before, the tide of Roman conquest had been stayed from spreading farther eastwards, when Arminius, by the destruction of the legions of Varus, was made the instrument of delivering from the Roman yoke those who in after years were to breathe the spirit of a newer and stronger life into the inert

civilization of the ancient world. For many an age the rugged fastnesses of these savage tribes remained undisturbed by the invader's foot, and then burst forth the torrent which spread for a while as a desolating scourge over Southern Europe, until by the providence of God a newer and more healthy condition of things took the place of the old. Hither, bent on no warlike errand, but bearing peaceful tidings, came S. Boniface and planted the seed of the Christian faith. One priest only he was able to leave : it was the casting of the bread upon the waters, that after many days it might be found ; and for awhile the seed sprang up but slowly. The Saxons were still engaged in continual warfare ; and their life was one of perpetual tumult. At this time, too, the great empire of Charlemagne was being consolidated ; and from his capital Aix la Chapelle, were to be repulsed with constant watchfulness the still barbarous Saxons. Nor were these without a leader capable of doing great things. Under Witikind, prince of Westphalia, a nation more united and better disciplined might utterly have defeated armies fully equal to those of Charlemagne. Again and again he aroused in them the spirit of resistance ; and so long as he met with any response, he led them against the Franks ; and even after they had for the most part submitted, he himself fled across the Baltic, and from thence returned, not once only, to rouse his countrymen against their conquerors. And now once more was the same spot, which had witnessed the overthrow of Varus and his legions, to be the scene of another victory gained by Charlemagne over Witikind. This battle was fought at Detmold, in the year 783.

After it was ended, the victor ascended the hill to the little chapel of S. Boniface, there to pay his vows for the help which God had granted to him, and he gave it the name of "The chapel of the Divine help," converting it afterwards into a Church. The hill still retains the name of Hulfersberg, or, as it is otherwise entitled, "Mons Adjutorii seu Salvatoris Christi." The Church continued to be the object of numerous pilgrimages, and the scene of great devotion, until the rise and spread of the Lutheran heresy; after which, when all communion with the Church of CHRIST had been put aside, and a self-chosen and human system raised up in its place, men came to think less and less of the Church of Hulfersberg, which was gradually deserted, and at last displayed nothing but a heap of ruins.<sup>1</sup> Thus it continued to the time of Daniel, Archbishop of Mayence, who in 1555 founded a college at Heiligenstadt for the purpose of converting the people from heresy, or confirming them in the faith by means of missions and catechising: and once again the holy sacrifice was offered up, and numbers resorted to the Church, both of Catholics and heretics who sought for themselves the benefits<sup>2</sup> which they saw were vouchsafed to the others.

Very similar, except in regard of its restoration, was the history of the little oratory which was built of the wood of the idol-oak near the town of Gesmere. The rude wooden structure, by the piety and devotedness of

<sup>1</sup> This is the assertion of Nicolas Schaten quoted in the *Acta* (Bolland.) of S. Boniface.

<sup>2</sup> See the same *Acta*. Junii. Tom. I. p. 499.

succeeding ages, grew up gradually into a large and beautiful church, as its grey ruins survived to testify, after the blight of evil doctrine passed over the land, and the reverence for holy things faded and died away.

The Church of S. Victor, which was situated without the walls of Mayence, was commenced in the lifetime of S. Boniface, carried on by succeeding bishops, and finished between the years 917 and 1011 by Willigisus, who attached to it a monastery for twenty canons. The Emperor Otho III. was present at its consecration, and by deed of gift assigned to it a tract of land in Thuringia.

Fifteen years after the death of Winibald, his brother Willibald resolved to rebuild the church and abbey of Heidenheim, which before had probably been chiefly a wooden building. Two years the work had been carried on, when they assembled to translate the relics of the holy abbot to the chapel and shrine called by his name.<sup>1</sup> They opened his sepulchre, and there, we are told, lay the body fresh and fair, as though he had departed but yesterday. Once more the people gazed on the still cold face of their former teacher and friend; and, after mass was sung, Willibald drew nigh, and, stooping down, gave his brother the kiss of peace, and the rest did likewise afterwards; and in succeeding ages many mercies were at his shrine vouchsafed to the sick and afflicted. The abbey continued to flourish, but was finally dissolved at the change of religion in the province of Brandenburg Anspach, where it was situated.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lives of the English Saints: Family of S. Richard, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Alban Butler, in S. Winibald.

And thus, in the fair countries of Northern Europe, till the weak love of a cold age began to think little of such things, was embalmed in the reverence and gratitude of the Church the memory of those blessed Saints whom in their lives no word might overcome, and whose deaths were right dear in the sight of Him Who liveth for evermore.

## APPENDIX I.

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### THE MIRACLES OF S. BONIFACE.

“He did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous.”

AMONG the consequences entailed upon us by the divided state of Christendom, the most lamentable, perhaps, is a cold and unconcerned scepticism which prevails to a far greater extent with almost all of us than ever enters into our thoughts. The very idea of division almost implies this as its result, for if the Churches of CHRIST be rent asunder, it must be for corruption either of teaching or of discipline : and when either is assailed, it must convey a shock to the faith and devoutness of many. The loss is our own ; but so long as we strive, with the grace of GOD, neither to add to it ourselves, nor to be brought under the dominion of this incredulous spirit, the guilt of it lies with those by whom the offence came. We are not now writing for men to whom the Divine claims of the Church and her supernatural powers are but as empty words and idle tales, but for those who believe that the Church is now what she has ever been, that the Church of this land is the same which S. Augustine renewed or planted, and in spirit now (as in fact then) in communion with Catholic Christendom. And therefore, while it would be both out of place and unbecoming to approach the subject of the miracles of Saints controversially, and to enter

on the battle-ground which has already been so triumphantly contested with the enemies of the Church, the sceptic, the scoffer, and the infidel,—still it may not be without use to speak briefly of the mode in which the devout Christian mind will handle the question.

It is not happily necessary for us to adopt here any tone of apology or defence. It may well be a grief of mind to such as have to argue with the unbelieving critic, that for them it is needful to speak as champions of holy and blessed Saints, whose prayers are being continually offered up for the Church on earth, until the number of the elect be accomplished. Each word of apology may well seem an injury done to their names and memories, and the need of bringing forth their deeds as evidences, instead of for the purposes of devotion, the token of a most miserable departure from the fervent love of more faithful ages. Time was when the biographers of Saints<sup>1</sup> were called upon to account, not for the number, but for the paucity of miraculous works wrought by their hands, as though such manifestations were a more fitting evidence of their holiness and their power with GOD than the far higher miracle of bringing those who sat in the valley of the shadow of death to the true light, and the living stream, and the heavenly Bread which nourishes the re-created man. But with some unhappily, in these later ages, the mention of but one miraculous work goes far to call into question the verity of their whole history; and the justification of this heartless unbelief is as paltry as the spirit itself is perilous and deadening. But it is only necessary here to show that the plea is plainly untenable which urges that the narration of false miracles deservedly throws a shade over all; and that there is nothing contrary to reason or the truth of the Gospel in believing that the manifestation of miraculous power may be vouchsafed in any age of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> See the second life of S. Boniface in the Bollandist Acta.

There was a time when the exhibition of such power was an innovation upon all known laws which governed the world. The sun had risen and set at its stated and, as might seem, unalterably fixed hours, until the day was lengthened at the bidding of Joshua,—the brute creation had continued without articulate speech until the serpent spoke to tempt man to his destruction,—every substance prepared by the hand of man for his own use remained in its own size and form, without any increase, until the Prophet's word kept the barrel of meal and the cruise of oil from failing. No subsequent reversal, therefore, of the laws of nature was any longer an innovation in the same sense in which the first manifestation of such power had been; and at once there existed a probability that such reversals of natural laws might be continued even to the end of the world. But, at the same time, we may discern a method (if we may so speak) even in these miraculous manifestations, although it is most perilous to attempt to place our own limits on any of the works of Divine power; we can only say that, as they have been displayed, they appear to have been so under a certain order.

First, then, the introduction of a new dispensation appears to be always accompanied with such supernatural evidences to attest its origin. The giving of the Law, and the setting forth the old covenant under Moses, was attended with miracles, and, far more abundantly, the opening of the new and living way by Him Who led captivity captive. But, as under the Mosaic dispensation supernatural providences never wholly ceased, and were manifested (after a long interval) with far greater frequency under the prophets, so, with the Christian Church, the miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries were multiplied far beyond those of the period which intervened between them and the Apostolic age; and as the prophetic miracles were in great measure confined to, and wrought by, the schools of Elijah and Elisha, so the



miracles of the fourth and subsequent centuries were mostly wrought by ascetics and solitaries, and the orders of which they were the heads. Thus in each there was a correspondence both of times and instruments. But, again, a similar correspondence may without difficulty be traced between the character and object of miracles of the several periods which have been mentioned, and this resemblance supplies the answer to the strongest objections which have been urged against the claim of the ecclesiastical miracles to any credence whatsoever.

For it is maintained that (apart from their coming to us under no warrant of inspiration, as do those contained in Holy Scripture,) the miracles of the Christian Church are of a wholly different character from those of our LORD, and of His Apostles, because the latter are for most important and solemn objects, (as the conversion of the heathen and the conquering of unbelief,) while the former are often without any adequate object at all; and that they very frequently exhibit a grotesque and romantic character from which the Scripture miracles are entirely free; that the Apostles wrought their wondrous works as the conscious possessors of supernatural power, while in later ages men either did not know what they wrought, or while they hoped and prayed, yet were not sure whether they would be the instruments of such mighty works or not.

To all these statements the answer is not indeed a difficult one; but it is, nevertheless, a two-edged sword, which, while it cuts off all doubt from the mind of the Catholic Christian, is likely at the same time to remove all ground of belief from the man who relies wholly on his reason. For they who so speak and so object, are unconsciously walking on a volcano's edge, unaware of their perilous footing. They are all the while taking their stand on their own authority, and thinking that their faith has received no injury, while they act on a principle which in its legitimate

results leads to utter unbelief. For, first of all, they draw a line of demarcation between the miracles of the Bible and all others: and then, denying the authority of the Church by whose tradition alone those sacred writings in their Canonical form have come down to them, they assert all the former to be true, and condemn all others as being a mixture of truth and falsehood. That in a measure this is the case, we have little inducement or inclination to deny; but there was a time when the miracles of the New Testament stood on the same footing essentially with all others, when false gospels, full of false miracles, were set forth side by side with the true Gospels of the four Evangelists, and spurious acts went along with the real history of the Apostolic age, until the Church, according to the Divine guidance which never forsakes her, interposed her authority, and by including some books within the sacred Canon, and excluding others, set a mark for ever to distinguish the true from the false. Yet the multitude of false miracles, ranged alongside of the inspired narratives, left the true miracles contained in the latter just where they are now: their truth was not affected by the fabrication of the others, and they challenged to themselves the belief of all men as imperatively as they do now. The objection, therefore, that ecclesiastical miracles are not to be believed, because they do not come to us on the warrant of inspiration, cannot stand, because the Holy Scripture itself rests upon the authority of the Church, which declared what was Holy Writ, and what was not. The question then is no longer one of authority, but of evidence; and according to the quality of that which is offered, a miracle must either be accepted unhesitatingly, or be held in abeyance, or regarded as doubtful, or rejected altogether.

But perilous as it is to refuse all credence to ecclesiastical miracles, because they have not the authority of Holy Scripture, it is equally perilous, if not more so, to insist on the

difference in their character and objects from those of our LORD and His Apostles. Many a thoughtless word of scorn, many a cutting sarcasm, many a profane scoff, has revealed the derisive unbelief of the speaker's mind, at what he might call the absurdity and puerility of the miracles of the saints. Happily for themselves, many are not conscious of the lengths to which such thoughts may lead; and by a most happy inconsistency, they avoid the chasm which yawns beside them. But the very weapon, which they shrink not from employing against the miracles of a particular saint and a particular age, has been wielded by the sceptic and the infidel, with a malignant triumph, against the miracles of Holy Scripture itself. They have not, indeed, found out for themselves, whither their own enunciations may guide them; yet there are not wanting men who, gifted with keener powers and more daring intellect, will gladly lead them to make the discovery which a better life and simpler faith has hitherto shrouded from their eyes. But if the fearful resemblance of their argument to that which the sceptic employs against the narratives of Holy Writ, be not enough to make them shrink from using it, surely the terrific denunciations of Him Whose Word shall never fail, against the temper thereby manifested, might well cause them to fear and tremble exceedingly. Surely the heart may well sink and be utterly dismayed at the very thought of the faintest approach towards slighting any the least manifestation of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT. The temper of credulity is nowhere explicitly condemned; but the most awful and implacable vengeance of GOD is denounced against the sin to which the sceptical and scoffing temper has so frightful a proximity. Bishop Butler has well urged the necessity of keeping always to the safer side in all doubtful matters of religion: of how much more solemn moment does the injunction appear when applied to the indulging of that mind which in the end becomes a living sin which

hath never forgiveness, either in this world, or in that which is to come.

The ecclesiastical miracles are not (as was before said) innovations upon an existing economy in the same sense as were the miracles in the Old Testament; but beyond this in their general types (apart from special instances which must stand or fall by their own evidence) they are the developments of those which are given to us in Holy Scripture. As a whole, indeed, (and only as a whole,) the latter impress us as more grave, and solemn, and awful. But many of them in their character fall short of several of the ecclesiastical miracles; and some, it is to be feared, are received unquestioningly by many, only because they are to be found in the Bible. And many again of the miracles of Church history are as solemn in their character and awful in their effects as any recorded in Holy Scripture.

It would not be difficult to prove that almost every kind of well authenticated ecclesiastical miracle has its antecedent in the Canon of Holy Writ; and that under parallel circumstances there are similar manifestations of miraculous power. The miracles of Scripture often differ most widely from each other in regard of their agency and their object. The character of the signs which attend the promulgation of a new dispensation, is quite different from that of those which are vouchsafed in its course: and the former are of a higher and graver kind, in human eyes, than the latter, and have each a special purpose, while the others seem to be wrought often without any reason at all. It is on this account that Protestant writers have generally been far more ready to give a patient attention to the miracles of missionary saints than to others, seeing that they, too, (like the Apostles,) are the heralds of a new covenant to nations who have not known GOD. Had many miracles been wrought by S. Boniface, which could be assigned to such a purpose, the same especial authority might have been claimed for their recep-

tion. But the very few which have been recorded of him partake of the character of those which are set aside as being worked for no especial cause, or as being of a grotesque and romantic kind, or as manifestations given to a man who did not know for certain (as the Apostles did) whether they would be vouchsafed to him or not. The same, however, may be said of several of the Scriptural miracles; and this (without dwelling on the levity and profaneness of such language when applied to miracles which we should rather designate as wrought for edification than for conversion) it may not be superfluous to show. As to the charge that they did not feel sure that the miraculous manifestation would be vouchsafed to them, or in them, and that they therefore prayed that it might be so, it is not easy to see wherein this differs from the prayer of S. Peter before he raised Dorcas to life again, or Elisha's before working the same miracle on the son of the Shunammite woman, or the supplication of Elijah before the descent of the fire from heaven upon the altar of sacrifice. And again, if some of them appear grotesque and strange, (we desire to speak with all reverence,) they are not more so than Elisha's causing the iron to swim, or the fact of Balaam's ass speaking, or the demoniacal possession even of brute beasts, or the vision of Jacob for the multiplication of his cattle, or the fitful and uncertain manifestations of preternatural power in the life of Samson. But they may appear also as wrought for no sufficient ends; and yet not more so than almost the greater number of the prophetic miracles. The supply of bodily wants, or the gaining of bodily comforts, might seem to be scarcely adequate reason for supernatural manifestations; yet, perhaps, the most numerous class of miracles comprises those which have been worked for this end, and sometimes even where natural means might easily have supplied the want. Such were the healing of the waters, and of the pottage by the casting in of meal, the

multiplication of the widow's flour and oil, and of the twenty loaves to supply a multitude, among the miracles of Elisha. Many likewise of those before mentioned might be held as coming under this class; but, indeed, the prophetical miracles altogether are such in their matter and scope as to leave little cause of offence on that account against the ecclesiastical.<sup>1</sup> The New Testament also supplies similar instances; but their general difference would arise from their being intended to answer different ends.

The miracles, therefore, of S. Boniface (like all other ecclesiastical miracles) must be judged of by the evidence which may be produced for them; only while we canvass the grounds on which each rests, let us award to the subject that amount of reverent attention which is its due. We dare not believe that the holy successor of S. Boniface in his archiepiscopal see, and others equally great and good, have deliberately conspired to fabricate narrations of miracles which were never wrought, or of supernatural manifestations which were never vouchsafed; and we shall be loth to suppose that biographers, living so close to the time of the holy martyr, and giving the sources from whence they obtained their matter,—men, moreover, of eminently holy life and conversation,—would wilfully exaggerate what had taken place, or purposely relate what had not.

Most of the miracles which are recorded as having occurred during the lifetime of S. Boniface, have been inserted in the narrative according to their probable date, without further comment. But they must not be dismissed here without a few words. In character they differ considerably from each other, one or two appearing scarcely more than strange coincidences, others again being far more solemn

<sup>1</sup> See the whole question discussed at length in the Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles, prefixed to the Oxford translation of part of Fleury's Ecclesiastical History, from whence much of the matter of the present chapter has been derived.

and awful. Yet this very discrepancy can no more be objected to them than to many of the Scriptural miracles; but apart from any such grounds, what right have we to limit the manifestations of Divine power to one kind more than to another? What authority have we, after all, for presuming to consider one kind trivial and another the reverse? It is in effect constituting ourselves the judges of the way in which the hand of GOD should work. We have been accustomed to a certain mode of dealing, exercised towards ourselves, into which, as we suppose, miraculous manifestations do not enter, and we are disposed to think this the fitting and normal condition of things. Whatever is different from this state, we pronounce to be of such and such a character, either puerile or momentous; and that some of the narratives of Scripture are of both kinds, we are unable, from our contracted mode of viewing things, to discern. Therefore it is that when, after reading the miracles of the Bible, we turn to those recorded in ecclesiastical history, many feel as if they had been transported into an unknown land, where the plants and animals are of a strange and uncouth growth. But even herein a parallel is at hand. We are accustomed in our own countries to certain kinds of brute animals, with whose forms and dispositions we are familiar; yet how strange would be the impression, were we suddenly conveyed to some distant region, and there surrounded by all the varieties (anomalous as we might deem them) of animal form. Probably we should proceed to designate them according to the impressions left on our minds. Some, doubtless, we should consider awful, or magnificent, or beautiful: others as certainly would in our eyes appear deformed and hideous: and not a few, absurd and ludicrous, if we may venture to use such terms. And yet not one of these, however mean and insignificant, but is the work of one and the same Almighty hand. With how much greater force may the analogy be applied to the various kinds of miraculous mani-

festations. For it has been well observed, that "there is far greater difference between the appearance of a horse or an eagle and a monkey, or a lion and a mouse, as they meet our eye, than between the most august of the Divine manifestations in Scripture, and the meanest and most fanciful of the legends which we are accustomed, without further examination, to cast aside."<sup>1</sup> It certainly is possible that many miracles may have to be rejected as fraudulent, and the results of collusion; but, at the same time, it must not be forgotten that so dealt the Jews with the miracle of our LORD's resurrection.

Of the apparently trivial class is the splitting of the oak at Gesmere, into four equal portions, without the instrumentality of man, recorded in the fourth chapter. Such an event might be set aside as only a strange and remarkable incident; but the caution must be repeated which has been given elsewhere, that men, who believe not in the likelihood of miraculous manifestation in the Christian Church, are practically in this respect living under a different dispensation: such things are hidden from their eyes, for the veil is before them, and they can by no means therefore be admitted as judges in cases such as the one just alluded to, or as the dream of S. Boniface, (in the fifth chapter,) whereby he was assured of his victory over the heretic Aldebert. With these may be classed the following out of the many miracles recorded as having been vouchsafed on the scene of his martyrdom, and in the various places where the body rested. This particular instance rests, according to the assertion of Willibald, his biographer, on the authority of S. Lullus himself. In the place where he died, there was shortly afterwards constructed a great dyke, to serve as a defence against the influx of the sea; and it was proposed to build near it a Church, and attach to it a Monastery, as was afterwards carried out. But the want of fresh and sweet water was

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles, p. xlix.



great, and they were at a loss what to do, till at last the prefect of the city, whose name was Abbo, mounted on horseback with his colleagues. While they were surveying the place, the horse of one of the attendants suddenly put its fore-feet into soft and yielding earth, and fell. With some difficulty the animal was extricated, and a stream of clear water presently welled forth and grew into the size of a rivulet. The eye witnesses returned home joyfully, to relate the things which had happened.

Again the Saint appears, after his martyrdom, to the Deacon Otpercht, who attests the fact on oath in the most solemn manner. The Scripture parallels to such appearances in visions are obvious; and yet more obvious and numerous are they to the miraculous supply of fish at Fulda, for the entertainment of those who were bearing thither the body of the holy martyr; and likewise to such a narration as the following:—

On one of his journeys into Thuringia, Boniface had reached a beautiful and well watered plain, where he resolved to remain till the following day. During the night a heavenly light shone down upon the tent, and a celestial vision was vouchsafed; therefore on that spot he afterwards built and dedicated a Church in honour of S. Michael the archangel. In the morning, having offered the holy sacrifice of the altar, he bade his attendant prepare the daily meal; but he answered that there was no food to set before him. Boniface replied, “Will not He, Who for forty years fed the multitude of His people with manna in the wilderness, give to me, the least of His servants, food enough for a single day?” So the table was set, and the benediction pronounced; and immediately a bird, as it flew past, dropped from its talons a fish, sufficient for the repast, which was cooked and placed before him.

The narrative of the judgment predicted by S. Boniface on the brothers of the Priest Adelhere (in the fourth chap-

ter) is, on the other hand, of the most solemn and awful character. A parallel to the precise judgment on the elder brother is furnished in the death of the children who mocked Elisha; and in the case of the younger, by the doom which the prophet denounced against Jeconiah; but in regard of the sin which drew down the judgment, the narration is very similar to that of the awful deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. It is one of those solemn events, which show that the Gospel brings the tidings of a dispensation which is not one of mercy only. It is a judgment which (like the one just mentioned in Holy Writ) carries us back to the retributive miracles wrought by the hand of Moses, in the same way as the sweetening of the waters by a branch, carries us forward to the miracles of mercy wrought by His hands who is very GOD and very Man.

There remains one other (but that the most numerous) class of miracles, vouchsafed not during the life, but at various periods after the death of Saints. Fifteen years after it had been laid in the grave, S. Willibald gave the kiss of peace to the earthly tabernacle of his brother Winibald: and many a mercy is recorded as having been vouchsafed to the sick and afflicted at his tomb, and those of S. Boniface, S. Walburga, and countless others of the servants of GOD. These must each and all (as has been before said) be accepted or rejected on the particular evidence which may be produced for them; but there are not wanting precedents in Scripture of a like kind, and those too of a most striking character. The miraculous manifestations, vouchsafed in the Old Testament, were but anticipations of the fuller and more abundant gifts to be vouchsafed to the Saints of the new covenant. Mercies granted then were but the shadows of better things to come: and it is absurd to imagine that the antitype will fall short of the type which preceded it, that the shadow will be more substantial than the body which casts it. Such a type and such a shadow is the raising of the dead man to

life on the instant that his body touched the bones of Elisha: It is entirely against the analogy of GOD's dealings with the Church to conclude that so stupendous a miracle, and apparently so causeless, should be granted under the law, and that less marvels should be displayed in the Church of CHRIST: and we are entirely at a loss to know, why so wondrous a manifestation should have been given, except to show forth the truth, that the bodies also of all the Saints and people of GOD are precious and holy, and possess a hidden virtue. And if this truth were instanced in one who lived under a dispensation in which the Spirit went and came, but did not abide ever in man, how much more might be looked for in those whose bodies, by the washing of baptism, have been made the temples of the HOLY GHOST? And if this intrinsic holiness belong to the mortal flesh of *all* who die in the LORD, is it a hard thing to suppose that even the course of natural decay should be arrested in the case of those, who by His grace have been enabled to serve Him with saintly heroism and self-abnegation and devotion? Not only however was the more abundant manifestation of such power foreshadowed by the virtue of Elisha's bones, but it is fully realised in the New Testament. Things inanimate become endued with power: the touch of the garment of our LORD stanches the issue of blood: the handkerchiefs carried from S. Paul's body restore the sick to health, and drive forth the evil spirits from their bodies: nay, with eager earnestness men sought so to place themselves, that even the shadow of S. Peter, as he passed by, might fall on them. Surely with these examples before us, we must shrink long indeed, before we reject similar miracles of a later age merely on account of their character. And in respect of their authority, it has been already shown that the fact of their not coming to us under the warranty of Holy Scripture only diminishes the degree of weight, but cannot bring them under altogether different rules of judgment.

It does not fall within our province to enter at length into the question of the ends to be accomplished by all miracles, and amongst them by the ecclesiastical, or of the purposes which they are intended to answer in the Divine economy; but there is one point more which it is needful to notice, namely, this:—if miraculous manifestations were to be vouchsafed to the Christian Church in every age (for the denial of which there is no authority in Holy Writ, and no evidence in ecclesiastical history), whence comes it that none such are now granted to our own portion of the Church Catholic?—whence is it that the Church, whose apostle S. Augustine, even by the willing confession of Protestant writers, wrought miracles, no longer exercises the power? The subject is a mysterious one, but we may venture to give an answer. Of the rents which have been made in that which once was the seamless robe of CHRIST, we cannot speak but with pain and sorrow; the consequence of them is every way a loss, whether on the one side it lead to a distortion and exaggeration of faith and practice, or on the other to a cold and indifferent intellectuality. The gifts of GOD are neither granted nor continued except on the fulfilment of the requisite conditions; and, doubtless, the power is lessened or taken away of doing such works, or supernatural manifestations are denied, because faith is weaker and our love has waxed cold.

Doubtless it might be otherwise if we still possessed the Faith which is as a grain of mustard seed; but although we may all, by the grace of GOD, believe to the saving of our souls, is it not too much to imagine that there is still amongst us the faith which, as a spreading tree, may shelter from the heat all who come, under the shadow of its branches? Yet more,—in proportion as the mind will not choose to see, in the same measure the power of seeing is lost. The men of later ages believe not in special providences; therefore they either do not receive them, or they are unable to discern them. To such, the illness sent to the

father of S. Boniface before he would allow his son to go into a monastery, would appear only a curious coincidence ; and we may not say how far, when applied to their own age, the words may be truly spoken. After the same manner, likewise, it may be with a Church which, if not explicitly, yet tacitly disclaims the possession of such supernatural powers, and looks not for such Divine manifestations. Miracles are not indeed essential to the life of a Church, or the primary evidence of individual holiness, but, whatever be their end and value, it may be concluded that they will be denied to a Church which does not believe that the power and the privileges are accorded to her. The fact, then, that such gifts are not vouchsafed amongst us will be neither a stumbling-block to ourselves, nor a bar to the reception of such as are manifested or exercised elsewhere. Indeed it should be noted, that there were more miracles wrought in schismatical Israel than in faithful Judah.

It only remains to give a few instances, among great numbers recorded, of miracles vouchsafed at the various places which were enriched with the relics of S. Boniface,—premisng that they all rest on the contemporary evidence of the brethren of the Abbey of Heiligenstadt, and some of them on the testimony of eye-witnesses. They are of various kinds, some being little more than striking occurrences, others of a graver kind,—some granted as blessings, while others again are of a retributive character.

In the year 1603, a young girl of noble family, and a Lutheran, fifteen years of age, was afflicted with a grievous swelling on the neck ; her parents tried every remedy, but in vain. At last some one suggested that she should make a vow ; the advice sunk deep into her heart, but to make a vow was against her faith, and, besides, she could not offer anything as her own without her parents' consent. They had recently given her a goat, but this appeared too great a gift : at last she vowed to give a pound of wax to the church at

Eichsfeld; and, the swelling departing, she went to perform her vow, but on her return found that the animal which she had grudged to give had suddenly died during her absence. Time passed on, and she forgot the benefit, and gave up going any more to the church, when the swelling returned with increased painfulness; she renewed her vow, and it went down again; but now each year she performed her pilgrimage to the church, and soon she began to have doubts as to the system in which she had been brought up; the Lutheran preachers she could not recognise as the pastors of the LORD's flock, and at last she went to Heiligenstadt, and made confession of her mind, and was received into the fold of the Catholic Church. The narrator speaks of her as still living when he wrote, in much distress, owing to the persecution of her parents, but stedfast against all attempts to withdraw her from the faith.

In the year 1609 the Calvinist heresy began to spread itself in those parts, and more numerous miracles were vouchsafed at the Church of Eichsfeld. A man named George Schuler received his sight; another was recovered from a long-standing disease; and many other examples are furnished of a similar kind through a long period of years.

In 1599, a youth, who was a Lutheran, ascended the hill to the church for the purpose of ridiculing the Catholics, and when he saw them drinking of the fountain of S. Boniface, he approached also, but the stream suddenly ceased to flow, and not until he had departed did it again well forth as before.

Just fifty years later, a Calvinist minister from a neighbouring town with some companions ascended the hills, impelled not by devotion but by curiosity to look upon the rites of the Church, and turn them into derision. When the Holy Sacrament was borne round in procession, he was heard to say, "Behold, here comes the devil;" and again, "Is not this the work of the devil?" When the procession

was ended, he went out by himself, purposing to return home. Some while after, when his companions left the church, they found the preacher a little way off, fallen down as in an epileptic or apoplectic fit. They spoke to him and questioned him, but could get no other reply than the words, which he constantly repeated, "O where is the hill of the SAVIOUR?" Seeing that it was impossible for him to stir, they placed him on a vehicle and took him home. For a long time he employed many remedies and medicines, and at length thought himself sufficiently recovered to preach; but when he ascended the pulpit for that purpose, he broke out into such a weak and insipid discourse, that the chief magistrate of the place sent a public apparitor to command him to come down. The infirmity lasted until his death, which took place the year following.

These examples, selected out of many others of similar kinds, are now left to the judgment of the reader. Undue credence is no doubt to be withheld here, as elsewhere; but let us at the same time be careful, while speaking of GOD's chosen servants, how we presume to limit what mercies He may grant to His faithful people who devoutly pray for His aid. Credulity, indeed, is no virtue, and superstition no merit; but Holy Scripture pronounces no blessing on a cold, and cynical, and captious temper.

## APPENDIX II.

## NOTES.

1. The Church of S. Martin, in the opinion of some, was built by King Dagobert at the desire of S. Wilfrid, when, after his expulsion by Egfrid from his see of York, he had landed in Friesland, and commenced the harvest which Willibrord and Boniface afterwards gathered in more abundantly. But the holy Wilfrid, than whom few saints have drunk of the cup of bitterness more deeply, could stay among his new converts but a very short while; and when, after his departure, the inhabitants in great measure relapsed into their former usages, the Church of S. Martin was dismantled; but when S. Willibrord fixed his archiepiscopal see at Utrecht, it was purified and hallowed again to the service of GOD, the injuries which it had sustained having been repaired. In after years it became the Cathedral Church of the city.—*See Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints, in S. Willibrord, November 7.*

2. This has been generally supposed to be the same with S. Willibald, the nephew of S. Boniface, and Bishop of Eichstadt. The opinion owes its origin to a mistake of Wicelius, in his "Hagiology of the Saints of the Church of God," published at Basle in the year 1541. The writer of a supplementary life of S. Boniface had stated simply, "*Willibaldus vitam conversationemque viri Dei, necnon passionem . . . conscripsit,*" &c. Wicelius (whether falling into the error himself, or following others) printed the passage—



“Ego, Willibaldus Episcopus, &c., vitam et passionem Bonifacii conscripsi,” &c. In this reading he was followed by Canisius, Serrarius, and Mabillon. But there is abundant internal evidence in the life itself to show that the writer was not the same with S. Willibald, who shared much of the labours of S. Boniface, and would have no need to betake himself to the accounts of other men; whereas the author of the life in question styles himself Willibaldus Presbyter, being probably a priest of Mayence. And so far from being an eye-witness of any of the labours of S. Boniface, he does not seem even to have been his contemporary. If he were, it could only have been during his extreme youth; and there is no evidence in the work itself that he had ever seen him. He states moreover that he had undertaken the task at the urgent request of Lullus, the successor of S. Boniface in the archiepiscopal see, and Megingozus his suffragan, and that his authorities were partly Lullus and Megingozus themselves, and in part other disciples and companions of S. Boniface, who had personal knowledge of the facts narrated; and he repeatedly states that his whole narrative has been obtained from the information of others, and from no acquaintance of his own with the labours of S. Boniface. It is manifest at once that S. Willibald could not so have spoken of himself.

3. The Monastery of Nutselle is stated to have followed the rule of S. Benedict, a native of Norcia in Umbria, born about A.D. 480. He founded the celebrated Abbey of Monte Cassino, in the kingdom of Naples, in the year 529, during the pontificate of Felix IV. The order has since multiplied itself into several independent bodies, as the Gilbertines, Silvestrians, Cistercians, which are, however, only reforms of the same order, with the constitutions slightly varied. The rule of S. Benedict was a very strict one. It has been celebrated in more recent times for the wonderful

constellation of wise and learned men which it has produced in various kinds of knowledge. But the rule, as designed originally, had regard almost wholly to manual instead of mental labour. They were enjoined the former during seven hours of every day, which are mostly now spent in reading and in spiritual functions. The original rule also commanded them to rise within two hours after midnight, and to spend the time from matins to daybreak in meditation, and also two hours each day in sacred reading; to abstain from all flesh meat, even of fowls, and never to partake of food out of the monastery, unless they were at a distance from home which precluded their returning the same day: it allowed moreover but a very small quantity of wine each day—the measure termed a hemina, the exact amount of which has been a matter of some disputation. In short, it aims principally at silence, solitude, prayer, obedience, and humility. For the attainment of the last-mentioned grace, it assigns twelve degrees: 1, sorrow of heart and fear of God's judgment, with a constant realisation of the Divine presence; 2, self-abnegation; 3, ready obedience; 4, patience under sufferings and injuries; 5, the imparting of our thoughts and designs to our spiritual director; 6, contentment and gladness in all kinds of humiliation; 7, to esteem ourselves baser than all, even the greatest sinners; 8, to avoid all love of singularity in words or actions; 9, the practice of silence; 10, the avoiding of dissolute mirth and loud laughter; 11, never to speak with a loud voice, and to be modest in our words; 12, to be humble in all our exterior actions.—See *the Life of S. Benedict in Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints*.

The Abbey of Nutselle was destroyed subsequently during one of the inroads of the Danes, and was never rebuilt.

4. Beretwald, according to the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, was consecrated by Guodun, Bishop of the Gauls. He was

the first Englishman who had filled the Archiepiscopal See of Canterbury. Up to this time it had been occupied by Romans, or, at all events, by foreigners. Berctwald is called by Bede "a man learned in the Scriptures, and well instructed in ecclesiastical and monastic discipline, yet not to be compared with his predecessor." He had, until his consecration, been Abbot of the Monastery of Raculph (now Reculver) on the Inlade. Archbishop Theodore, whom William of Malmesbury terms a consummate scholar, and who presided over the see for two and twenty years, had been consecrated by Pope Vitalian, A.D. 668, when he was sixty-six years of age. He was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, consequently a Greek as well as a Latin scholar. With him Hadrian was sent into England, to preside over the Abbey of Saint Augustine, but partly also from the jealous care already shown by the Latin Church against the subtle intellect of the Greeks. However, Theodore himself was especially zealous subsequently in preventing the spread into England of the Eutychian or Monophysite heresy, which at that time was vexing the Church at Constantinople, and which maintained that the Divine and human natures of our LORD, although distinct before they were united, yet when united became only one nature. "The English Church received more advantage," is the testimony of Bede, "during the time of his pontificate, than ever they had done before."

Theodore and Berctwald were, moreover, the first Archbishops of Canterbury who were buried within the Church of S. Peter and S. Paul, for before that time, they had all been buried in the north porch of the same (which was now full), where reposed the body of S. Augustine.—*Bede, Hist. Eccl.* ii. 3, and iv. 1.

5. Winfred likewise urged to Willibrord his want of age, and deprecated his election before he had attained the Canonical period of fifty years. The precise import of this

is doubtful. There is no ecclesiastical law to that effect, nor was the custom everywhere observed: and he was himself consecrated Bishop seven years earlier. It is the opinion of some, that it was a rule in England that none should be set apart to the priestly office before thirty years of age, or to the episcopal before fifty, and that this rule was thence called Canonical; while others have considered that he was referring to the Levitical ordinance (Numbers viii. 24), which enjoined that after fifty years of age the Levites should be advanced from the service of the tabernacle to the charge over it.

6. S. Rupert, or Robert, the Apostle of Bavaria, was by birth a Frenchman, and of royal blood. The time of his mission has been disputed. Some place it in 570 or 580; but stronger proofs have been produced by Mabillon and others for deferring it to 696. The sovereign of Bavaria at that time was Theodore, who, with most of his people, was baptized by S. Rupert. He had been Bishop of Worms, but being expelled by the violence of the people, he was made Primate of Bavaria, and fixed his see at Juvava, now Salzburg. He laboured greatly also at Ratisbon, and Laureacum, or Lorch. When his health was declining, he appointed Vitalis Bishop of Salzburg, and retiring to Worms, died about the year 718. But the see had long been vacant when a Priest named John was appointed to it by S. Boniface in 739. In after times the Archiepiscopal See was transferred thither from Laureacum in honour of S. Rupert.

The Christian faith had, however, been planted in Bavaria as far back as two hundred years before this time by S. Severinus; but heresy had sprung up, and owing to the convulsed condition of the country from wars and tumults, and all the horrors consequent upon them, the light of the Gospel had been entirely extinguished.—See *A. Butler* in *S. Boniface*.

7. There was one other who was judged by Boniface to be a teacher of heresy, a Priest named Virgilius, by birth an Irishman. Boniface addressed a letter to Pope Zacharias, in which he stated that Virgilius had striven to sow the seeds of discord between himself and Odilo, Duke of Bavaria, and that, amongst other errors, he taught that there were other men under the earth, with another sun and moon, and another world. It is not, however, to be concluded from this statement that Boniface denied the fact of there being any antipodes, or maintained that the earth was flat. But the error here meant was the maintaining that in this our world lived a race of men not descended from Adam, and not redeemed by CHRIST. It is, indeed, true that some of the fathers, as S. Augustine and S. Bede, seem to suppose the world a flat surface: but the greater part, as S. Basil, S. Athanasius, the two S. Gregories, taught that it was a sphere: but this is a question which can no way be a matter of faith: and the expression of either opinion would not therefore be objected to by S. Boniface. The Pope, however, pronounced no immediate sentence in the case; but only said that if Virgilius taught such an error as the one above mentioned, he ought to be deposed, and ordered him to be sent to Rome, there to be examined as to his faith. We must conclude that he entirely cleared himself of the imputation of heresy; for he was soon after consecrated Bishop of Salzburg, and having planted the faith in Carinthia, of which country he appointed Modestus to be the first Bishop, died in 784.—*A. Butler, in S. Zacharias, &c.*

8. In the year 751, Pope Zacharias confirmed to Boniface and his successors, the possession of Mayence as their Metropolitan See, in a letter from which the following is an extract.

“While your fraternity was occupied with those pious

labours, you had not hitherto fixed upon your cathedral city. But when GOD prospered your preaching, you desired of us that we should confirm to you and your successors a Cathedral Church, according to the petition of the Franks, our sons in the faith; and, therefore, by the authority of the blessed Peter the Apostle, we desire that the aforesaid Church of Mayence, shall be set apart as a metropolis for you and your successors, having under it these five cities, Tongres, Cologne, Worms, Spire, and Utrecht, and all the nations of Germany, which, by the preaching of your fraternity, have been brought to see the light of CHRIST."

Shortly after this time, Cologne, and many other Churches, were made Archiepiscopal Sees: but in honour of S. Boniface, Mayence has always retained the primacy.

The name of Eoban, suffragan of S. Boniface, in the See of Utrecht, is not found in the list of Bishops of that place, because he did not survive him: while the name of Gregory, as having died later, is found, although he was never consecrated Bishop at all.—*Acta Sanctorum (Bolland.)*, Junii 1. 473 (a).

9. It has been made a matter of dispute whether Pope Zacharias and S. Boniface had anything to do with the raising of Pepin to the regal title, by the holy chrism at his coronation. It is scarcely needed here to give the origin and progress of the controversy: but some authorities are given as decisive of the fact, which were cited by Henschenius in defence of the assertion. It is found in a passage appended to a MS. of Gregory of Tours on the Lives of the Fathers, written in the year 767, where it is stated that Charles and Carlomann, the sons of Pepin, were, along with their father, crowned by Pope Stephen, and that Pepin himself had been raised three years before to the kingly title by the consent of Pope Zacharias, the predecessor of Stephen, who crowned not only Pepin, but his wife Bertrada, and

forbade the electing of any hereafter to be king, except their descendants. This statement was written only twelve years after the death of S. Boniface. It is confirmed by the *Annales Tiliani*, which state that in the year 749 Pope Zacharias gave his commands to Fulrad, Pepin's chaplain, that the name of king should be given to him who already possessed the power, and that in the year 750 Pepin was anointed to the kingly office by the hands of S. Boniface in the city of Soissons. The *Annales Loiseliani*, which extend from 741 to 814, give a precisely similar account. The *Annales Francorum Fuldenses* contain the following passage relative to the year 752:—"Pope Zacharias, by the authority of the Apostle S. Peter, gave order to the Frank people that Pepin, who had the kingly power, should also receive the title. Therefore Childeric, the last King of the Merovingian dynasty, was deposed, and sent into a monastery. And Pepin was raised to the kingly title, and anointed in the city of Soissons by the hands of the Archbishop Boniface." But, more conclusively, Baronius, in his annals relating to the year 752, asserts that all writers of French history, of whatever age, agree in giving the same account.—*See the Bollandist Acta Sanctorum, in S. Boniface.*

10. The following deed records the founding of the abbey and the extent of its territory.

"Boniface, Legate in Germany of the holy Roman Church, to all religious men who fear GOD, dwelling in the kingdom of the Franks. I suppose that it is known to most people that the illustrious Carlomann, who rules with his brother Pepin the empire of the Franks, has given to us some ground, in the Bochonian Wood, fit for building a monastery, and bestowed it for ever on the servants of GOD. Wherefore, it has seemed good to us to mark out the same spot according to its true boundaries, and to confirm it by faithful witnesses, who were present when the aforesaid

prince gave up the land and made it over to us. The boundary then of the Monastery of S. Saviour, which is situated on the banks of the river Fulda, is, first, the fountain on the eastern side of the river, called by the name of Crummenbach, &c. . . . So has this ground been made over to us by Pepin and the aforesaid Prince Carlomann, that it may be set apart in the service of our SAVIOUR for ever, to gather together and support His servants without any hindrance or usurpation from others. The seal of Boniface, Archbishop, who has caused this parchment to be written for the information of all men ✠: the seal of Burchard, Bishop ✠: the seal of Sturmi, Abbot ✠. In the year of the incarnation of our LORD 747, and the sixth of the reign of Carlomann and Pepin his brother, the 20th day of the month of March. This paper was written in the Monastery of Fulda, by Megenhelmus, by the Divine permission and command, Priest."





March, 1853.

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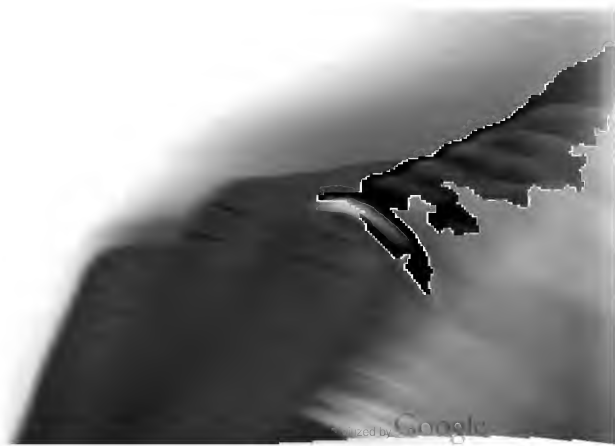
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